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ABSTRACT

Materials for the fourth year of the Wisconsin Families in Education program are included in this document. These materials are intended to help schools to organize more parent and community involvement programs. The material is organized into five packets. The first packet, the introductory packet, contains a discussion of the themes for the year, instructions on using the packets, and a sample information release. The theme of the second packet, targeted to the first quarter, is family and cultural diversity. Topics include educating language-minority children, reaching the single parent, and American Education Week Activities. The theme of the third packet, targeted to the second quarter, is volunteerism and community service. Topics include how to start a volunteer program and the best parent involvement ideas. The theme of the fourth packet, targeted to the third quarter, is parents as learners. Topics include immunization update and helping children to learn study skills. The theme of the fifth packet, targeted to the fourth quarter, is children in need. Topics include how parents can help young children to learn study skills, alcohol and drug abuse, characteristics of teenage cults, and working with families who live in poverty. Each packet includes a logo page of related clip art. (ABL)

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Families in Education

Educating Everyone Takes Everyone

CG024049

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction DPI Herbert J. Grover, State Superintendent

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Families in Education

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Introductory Packet

Welcome Letter
State Superintendent Herbert J. Grover welcomes all participants to the fourth year of the Families in Education program.

The Themes
The theme for this year is the same as the American Education Week theme, "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone," with special concern for the Forgotten Half, the non-college youth in America. Also, the quarterly themes chosen for the Families in Education packets are introduced.

Using the Packets
This is information on incorporating community involvement into existing committees and activities.

Start the Year with a Family Kite Fly-In
During this year of involving everyone in education, bring together school staff, families of cultural diversity, non-college youth, and other members of the community at a family picnic or kite fly-in. Here are some tips to get you started.

Remember the Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth
Involving non-college youth in local school programs will provide many lessons of success for children and parents.

Sample Information Release
This release will let the community know of your school's intention to continue the Families in Education program as well as announce your first invitation to share a fun experience before school begins.

Logo Page
This page of reproducible logos is included for use as clip art in your school or PTA/PTO newsletters and handouts.

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Phone: (608) 266-3390

Mailing Address:
Post Office Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841

Herbert J. Grover
Superintendent of Public Instruction

August 1990

Dear Families in Education Coordinator:

Welcome to the fourth year of the Families in Education Program.

Results of this summer's evaluation of the Families in Education packets received from the school districts indicate that many teachers and administrators find the information useful. They say the materials helped organize more parent and community involvement programs in their schools.

All schools can and should undertake specific programs to encourage and support the family's educational responsibilities. These programs must include and go beyond traditional forms of family involvement in order to reach the growing numbers of employed mothers, single parent families, and those bringing cultural diversity to our schools. This year's Families in Education themes will help you address these current issues.

We welcome family and cultural diversity in Wisconsin schools and include all parents and children as a legitimate, integral part of our Families in Education program.

To ensure the concept of families as educators is ongoing, it is vital that teachers and administrators work effectively with families as partners. We hope the enclosed information will be helpful in reinforcing these partnerships.

Sincerely,

Herbert J. Grover
State Superintendent

Educating Everyone Takes Everyone

First Quarter

Family and Cultural Diversity

Second Quarter

Volunteerism and Community Service

Third Quarter

Parents as Learners

Fourth Quarter

Children in Need

Using the Packets

Each public school district administrator will receive two copies of each packet unless a Families in Education (FIE) coordinator was appointed. Then, the coordinator will receive the copies. One can be filed in a binder for reference and the other can be cut, reproduced, and shared with others.

Coordinator

It is suggested that FIE coordinators photocopy materials as needed. The materials in the packets may be reproduced for school or school-related purposes, such as letters to district residents, school publications, handouts at meetings, and classroom use. It is not necessary to contact the Department of Public Instruction for permission. Keep the bottom line on the reproducible; it gives credit to the source.

Work With the Community

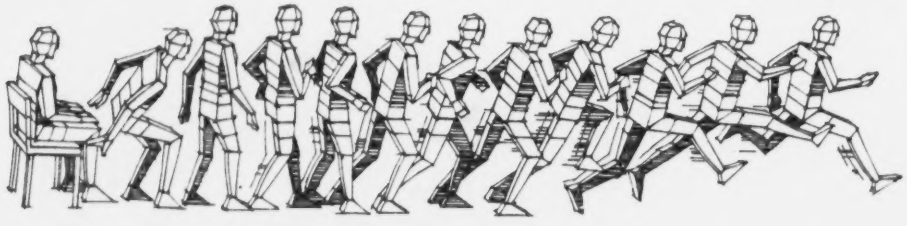
Each school should have organized a families in education committee by this time. This committee – consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, business personal, community members, and students – is a help to the school. It distributes the work load, creates a communication network, and serves as a positive link between the schools and the community.

Parents and teachers need to work hard at knowing one another. They must work together as a team. They must communicate on a regular basis in an open manner. They must meet often enough to feel comfortable and unthreatened in their separateness. They must have spontaneous and substantive communications and interactions. If teachers do not welcome parent involvement, it will not happen. Teachers are the key. They must realize that if they want to teach more academic-directed students, it will come about with the help of parents. Parents are children's first teachers. Children's early education is deeply rooted in the values, traditions, and norms of family and culture. The school is an extension of the family and should encourage the formation of positive actions among its students.

Wisconsin schools are beautiful examples of family and cultural diversity. The "mixture" is a wondrous thing that should be appreciated by educators. Schools are enriched by the combination of various cultures, and children learn how to work in school with others who are unlike themselves, as they will when they enter the work force.

Get Media Coverage

To get the best media coverage, contact your newspaper editor and radio or television station news director and arrange a meeting. Explain the overall purpose of this program and include some specific events and goals your school has planned on the local level. Ask the editors and directors what you can do to make it easier for them to cover your events. Try to get a media person on your Families in Education committee.



Start the Year with a Family Kite Fly-In

Celebrate the theme "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone" with a family kite fly-in. This is a good activity in which to involve people of all ages. Those who like activity could offer leadership in a kite-making activity while others could plan a community picnic.

How To Get Organized

1. *Organize a planning committee* that includes representatives from all segments of the community: school, parents, youth, business leaders, elderly, and other agencies interested in the welfare of your community.

2. *Choose a date and time* which does not conflict with a major community or regional event. Decide if families will build or bring kites for the event and who will bring food and games.

3. *Choose a site*, such as the school grounds or park, which can accommodate picnic tables, restroom facilities, refuse containers, and a games and play area. A large area for kite-flying must be free of telephone lines and trees. Have a first aid kit handy. A shelter is an asset in case of inclement weather.

4. *Make plans for inclement weather* and include them in all announcements about the picnic/kite fly-in. If there is no wind for kite-flying, reserve a place where the kites can be exhibited. Set a rain date.

5. *Prizes* can be a great attendance incentive. Ask local merchants and service organizations to donate prizes. Establish rules for the awarding of prizes and set up a door prize entry box. Avoid giving prizes for "best kite" and "highest kite" to keep the event non-competitive.

6. *Determine guidelines* for food and refreshments. The easiest approach may be the traditional potluck, although there may be organizations who may want to sell refreshments.

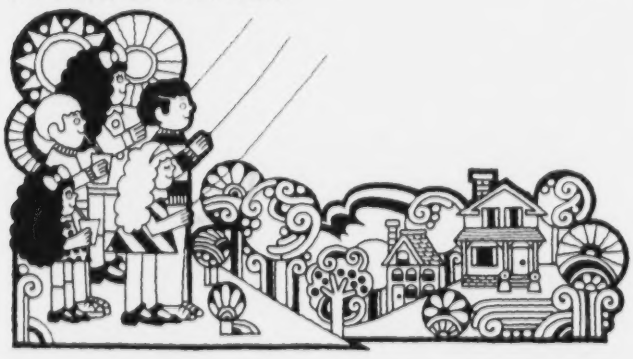
To Assure Success

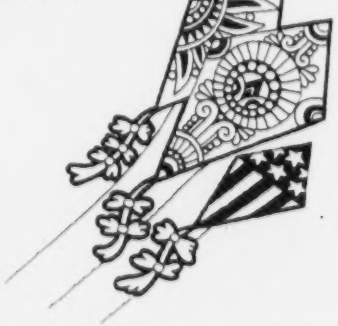
7. *Give specific information* about when the picnic/kite fly-in starts, when food should be there, what people should bring (food, utensils, lawn chairs, balls, game equipment), when people will start eating, and when other games and activities will take place.

8. *Get local groups involved.* People are more inclined to attend if they know friends, relatives, and acquaintances will be there.

9. *Get the word out!* Work with the news media from the beginning. Put up posters in stores, banks, schools, clinics, homes for the elderly, and public places. Mail flyers or school newsletters to homes, businesses, and community organizations and send them home with students. Mention that the young adults of the community will be assisting with kite-making.

10. *Stress that this is a community event* and that everyone is invited.





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Remember the Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth

The Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship, established by William T. Grant, has explored the strengths of America's young men and women, their families, and the programs and community institutions that serve them. The commission looked at young adults, where they stride as well as where they stumble, and learned lessons of their success. The report documented both the good news about their personal accomplishments and the bad news about the educational and economic opportunities they face.

Purpose of Report

The dominant focus of the commission is on developing public and private initiatives to stimulate the latent capabilities of the Forgotten Half and to help them participate in a full life as family members, workers, and citizens.

The goal of the commission is to add a sense of confidence, accomplishment, and security to these 20 million non-college-bound young people in America.

The report suggests four major strategies to help.

- Enhance the quality of youth-adult relationships, both in and out of the family.
- Expand community supports, with an emphasis on youth service and youth leadership activities, to help integrate all young people into their communities and the nation.
- Improve current employment opportunities.
- Provide more equitable youth education and training policies.

Responsible Youth

Most of the Forgotten Half are resilient and resourceful. They set goals and find a way to realize them. Here are some encouraging facts.

- More students are staying in school longer, earning both high school diplomas and college degrees. By age 25, approximately 86 percent of the nation's young people have earned a diploma or the GED equivalent.
- About 82 percent of 20-24-year olds are in the workforce, many employed in part-time, low-paying jobs which cannot adequately support a family.
- At least one-third of all high school students responsibly hold part-time jobs in any given week, and three-quarters of all high school seniors work an average of 16-20 hours a week.
- Studies of teenagers and the varied experiences of communities verify that, when offered the opportunity for constructive participation in school and community life, they volunteer their talents with enthusiasm.
- Young people contribute 250 million hours of voluntary service to their communities each year through state, federal, and local community service programs.

Too often adults think of the Forgotten Half as failures, simply because they do not attend college. As youth employment opportunities diminish, so do chances for establishing families, becoming responsible citizens, and avoiding poverty. Adults should hold these youth in high regard and believe in their ability to succeed. They should help provide practical ways to make success possible for young people.

Many recommendations are listed in the Families in Education materials for the second quarter which expand community supports and opportunities for service to young people. Try to include these youth in your community programs.

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SAMPLE INFORMATION RELEASE

(Adapt to your needs and retype on district letterhead)

Local Contact: (name, title, telephone

Families in Education Program Continues

A statewide program to promote family involvement in education will continue for its fourth year during the 1990-91 school year, said State Superintendent Herbert J. Grover.

Grover, who strongly encourages parents and communities to join with schools in the education of children, announced quarterly topics which relate to American Education Week's theme, "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone." The four themes develop the topics of family and cultural diversity, volunteerism and community service, parents as learners, and children in need.

The (district name) School District will continue to participate in the program, said District Administrator (administrator's full name), with a number of activities and events for families of all types.

"Today's families are changing dramatically. There is an incredible diversity in American families today, and it's wonderful," said (administrator's last name). "We want our children to learn how to study and work together in this pluralistic country."

One of the first events to bring families and schools together will be a (community picnic, cultural fair, school open house, community talent show, or family kite fly-in. Mention date, time, details, and contact person.)

Families in Education

Educating Everyone Takes Everyone

Families in Education

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First Quarter

Family and Cultural Diversity

Removing Barriers for Children of Culturally and Linguistically Different Families
As students become more diverse in terms of culture, language, living styles, and socio-economic status, teachers are eager to find more ways to work effectively with students and their parents. Norma Barquet, associate director for National Origin, presents insights and suggestions.

Encourage All Families to Take Pride in Their Nationalities
Each family has customs, people, history, and culture of which it can be proud. These tips will help family members share the treasures of their own nationalities.

Educating Language-Minority Children
In many school districts, languages of Central and South America, Africa, and Asia mix with American dialects, creating classrooms in which communication is difficult. Here are some considerations for teachers as they deal with language diversity.

Bilingual-Bicultural Education Programs
School districts can accumulate ideas for their bilingual-bicultural programs or learn how to start one by contacting the school districts listed here.

Reaching the Single Parent
This is a page of tips for teachers who work with children from single-parent homes.

Kids Need Help When Their Parents Remarry
Co-authors of a book on family experiences write about the difficulties children face when their parents separate or remarry. Researchers estimate that 60 percent of today's children will live in single parent households before they are 18.

Fathers Involved in Child Rearing
Dave Riley, assistant professor of Family Research, University of Wisconsin, talks about fathers today who play a role beyond that of breadwinner, the role in family functioning and child development.

American Education Week Activities
These school, community, and classroom activities help develop the theme for American Education Week, "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone."

Family Pride

This sheet can be duplicated and given to children to encourage them to think of family activities that make them proud of their families.

Quotations

These quotations may be used in newsletters, articles, and speeches and on bulletin boards.

References to 1987-90

Use these convenient references to find related articles in the packets produced in 1987-88 (Year of the Family in Education), 1988-89 (Families in Education – Our Children . . . Wisconsin Cares), and 1989-90 (The Year of Community Partnerships).

Resources

This is a list of publications recommended for libraries by the Association for Libraries Serving Children (ALSC).

Media Materials

Use the public service announcements and the press release as part of your public awareness campaign. Clip art is included for use in school newsletters, flyers, other publications, or for inclusion on items sent to parents and community members.

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Removing Barriers for Children of Culturally and Linguistically Different Families

As the students in our classrooms become more diverse in terms of their cultures, languages, living styles, and socio-economic status, teachers and administrators are increasingly eager to find more effective ways to work with students and their parents in order to combat the low achievement and high dropout rates that plague our schools today.

Working collaboratively with parents is one successful strategy to bring about a multicultural educational environment and better outcomes for culturally and linguistically different children. Schools that value and respect the language and culture of the home and that use them as an integral part of the process and content of the educational program create a real sense of belonging within the school for the children, their parents, extended families, and communities in general.

Many Families Experience Hardships

As we design parent involvement programs, we must keep in mind that in addition to their ethnolinguistic differences, national origin groups such as the American Indians, Hispanics, Hmong, and Laotians often share the culture of poverty with many other low socio-economic groups in this country. The hardships of immigration, socio-economic needs, and the cultural values and life styles of their families impose on these children the responsibilities usually associated with the roles of parents. They often serve as interpreters for parents. They often serve as interpreters for parents and other family members, and some are expected to work full time to help support the family or are kept from school to care for younger siblings.

The characteristics of these families, such as the roles (gender related, position in the family, extended family) of the different members and their specific abilities, skills, and interest in becoming involved with the schools should be explored and taken into consideration when developing programs and activities. For schools to work effectively with these students and their parents, they must appreciate and be sensitive to the unique characteristics and conditions of these families.

Reserve Judgment

Schools with successful parent involvement programs do not judge the parents' attitudes and behaviors or their level of involvement in the schools. Instead teachers assume that most parents want the best for their children and that the way in which parents become involved in their children's education is usually determined by home culture, life style, ad other socio-economic conditions. In other words, the care and concern of parents of linguistically and culturally different students should not be measured by the level of perceived interest or type of involvement of the parents.

Traditional Involvement Preferred by Some

Parents of language minority students are often involved in their children's education in more traditional ways such as reading at home, telling stories, and encouraging them to do homework. We must try to understand the apparent reluctance of some parents to participate more directly in school-related activities. Based on the high status enjoyed by teachers in other countries, for instance, some families of immigrant children have a great trust and respect for educators and do not deem it necessary or even appropriate to share in the-decision-making processes that affect their children's educationchildren's education.

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children's education.

Some are intimidated by the bureaucratic nature of American schools and others, such as the American Indians, African Americans, and Hispanics, have felt excluded from participating in the past and therefore are skpetical about becoming involved.

Develop Strong Outreach Programs

Creative planning, coordination, and implementation of a parent involvement program for national origin parents is critical to its success. Equally significant is its outreach component. The communication skills and commitment of the person who serves as liaison between parent groups and the school is crucial. This person initially represents the school and establishes a consistent and trusting relationship between the school and the families. Once this trust has been established, it must be nurtured and developed by all of the members of the school community as they interact with the children and their families.

One of the most important concepts that must be remembered in working with culturally and linguistically different families and economically disadvantaged groups is their vulnerability when confronted with bureaucratic systems which they don't understand and which don't value their human diversity. Educational bureaucracies reflect the power relations between dominant and dominated groups of the larger society. Our goal as educators and equity advocates is to remove barriers to meaningful and equitable participation for all children in order to ensure that they can claim one of the most fundamental rights of the citizens of a democratic society – the right to a good education.

Source: Norma Barquet, Associate Director for National Origin, Equity Coalition Programs for Educational Opportunity, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

Encourage All Families to Take Pride in Their Nationalities

With today's emphasis on the importance of educating minorities and immigrants, American families who have lived and worked for generations in our country may feel that their values and cultures are less important or ignored by government agencies whose job it is to give all children a good education.

All families are important and children should feel proud of the national heritage of their families. Children who feel pride in their families also develop self-esteem, an essential quality to achieving success. These classroom projects can be used by teachers to emphasize the importance of all nationalities and to increase students' pride in their family cultures.

Classroom Projects

• *Have a cultural fair in the classroom.* Ask students to talk to their parents and relatives about their nationalities. Older students can read parts of the history of countries from which their ancestors came and chose one story or event to share in the classroom. If parents allow it, students can bring photographs, artifacts, tools, costumes, slides, tapes, records, and other items for classmates to see and hear. Parents may be willing to prepare a favorite recipe handed down through generations and serve it as a treat to the students.

• *Discover a hero.* Ask students to read history books and references about the country of their ancestors until they discover a new hero, a person who has done something important for the good of mankind. The hero need not be a well-known person. Ask the students to tell the class why they chose their heroes and whether they know of anyone today who is similar to their heroes.

• *Design a coat of arms.* Coats of arms in the 1300's were symbols of historic qualities and events. They became family traditions handed down from father to son. Ask students to design a coat of arms that represents the country of their ancestors and their families. It could include some of the family's favorite things, hobbies, games, values, beliefs, or careers. Tell the students the symbolism attached to colors (blue = loyalty, red = courage, etc.) and ask them to color their coats of arms or to cut their crests and mottos from colored paper. Display the coats of arms in a hall or room where students can cluster and listen to the comments made by students and teachers.

• *Write to pen pals.* Find organizations that help students find pen pals in various countries. Talk about things students could tell or ask their pen pals. Encourage students to write to someone from a country of their national origin. Some students may prefer to become a "video pal" by taping school activities.

• *Proclaim nationalism days in school.* Set aside one day each month for a different nationalism day, such as Irish Day, Polish Day, German Day. Help students of each nationality organize a bulletin board display about the country being celebrated. Invite students to wear the colors of the country's flag. Teach a few words and common phrases in the foreign language. Encourage patriotism and loyalty; do not allow students to use insulting jokes which downgrade nationalities.

• *Create a family tree.* Show students how to organize a family tree. Ask students to talk to their parents, guardian, or grandparents to learn as many names as possible for their family trees. Write a form letter in the classroom which will guide students if they want to write to relatives to ask for information about ancestors. Provide paper large enough to encourage students to add to their family trees in

show their family trees and talk to the class about them.

• *Record oral history.* Encourage cross-cultural community awareness by having students work on traditional oral history projects as a social studies assignment. Arrange for students to use a tape or video recorder to interview the older people in their neighborhood, nutrition site, church or synagogue, or in school. Discuss topics that students could ask during the interviews, such as family customs, education, friends, music, dating, jobs, and coping with changes. Some may be willing to read an original poem, sing a song in their native language, or play a tune on a musical instrument. Arrange the history collection by countries and make them available to other classes, community clubs, and at a school open house.

• *Encourage interaction among students of different cultures.* Arrange the class in a circle to encourage student–to–student interactions. Encourage students to see each other not always as students, but as teachers, critics, inventors, and thinkers. Ask the students to talk about their dreams of the future or about a fundamental change they would like to see in a social or economic structure. Solve the problems in small groups or through role playing. Share solutions with the class to give individuals and the group a feeling of "working together for change."

Educating Language-Minority Children

In many school districts, languages of Central and South America, Africa, and Asia mix with American dialects, creating classrooms in which communication is difficult. Language-minority children will become the majority in many public schools. Here are some considerations for teachers as they deal with language diversity.

A Common Language in All Schools?

In a nation increasingly composed of people who speak different languages and dialects, the old notion of melting them together through the use of a common language is once again attractive. Requiring all children to speak the same language at a high level of proficiency would make the task of educating them a good deal easier. Unfortunately, what seems good in theory is often difficult to put into practice. The interrelationship of culture, language, and the children's development may make a common language difficult to obtain.

Culture, Language, and Development

Culture influences both behavior and the psychological processes on which it rests. Culture forms a prism through which members of a group see the world and create shared meanings. And a group's culture is reflected by the group's language.

Child development follows a pattern similar to that of culture. Major structural changes in children, such as language learning, arise from the interaction of biology and experience. Such changes are remarkably similar in kind and sequence among cultural groups. But the knowledge and skills – the cultural learning – the child acquires at various ages depend on the child's family and community.

In the Classroom

Classroom discourse presents children with the challenge of learning new rules for communication. The use of formal language, teacher control of verbal exchanges, question-and-answer formats, and references to increasingly abstract ideas characterize the classroom environment, with which many children are unfamiliar. Children whose past experience with language is not congruent with the new rules will have to learn ways to recreate meaning before they can use language to learn in the classroom. Teachers may be unaware of variations between their understanding of a context and their students' and also between their expectations for behavior and the children's inclinations. When children and adults do not share common experiences and beliefs, adults are less able to help children encode their thoughts in language.

What Is an Appropriate Curriculum?

How can teachers organize expressive language experiences, stress word meaning, or test for mastery of the curriculum if children do not speak a standard language or use the same styles of communication? Cultural diversity makes it hard for teachers to assess each child's developmental status and find common educational experiences to promote growth. It becomes obvious that the same curriculum cannot be used for all children. However, the following developmental principles can provide a framework for teachers trying to bridge the gap between children's cultural backgrounds and school objectives.

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Guidelines for Teachers

1. Recognize developmentally equivalent patterns of behavior.

2. Value some ways of achieving developmental milestones more highly than others. Remember that children who speak languages other than English or nonstandard dialects are often reluctant to give up this connection to their group.

3. Start instructions with content that is familiar to the children. Establish a basis for communication. Since many teachers are not fluent in several languages, they should become more adept at planning and implementing a culturally sensitive curriculum.

4. Interpret school and classroom goals for parents. School learning is most likely to occur when family values reinforce school expectations. Parents and other community members must view school achievement as a desirable and attainable goal if children are to build it into their sense of self.

5. Be an affectionate, interested, and responsive teacher. Use principles of child development to safeguard the self-confidence of children.

Source: This digest was adapted from from "Educating Language-Minority Children: Challenges and Opportunities" by Barbara T. Bowman, Phi Delta Kappan, October 1989, 1989.

Bilingual-Bicultural Education Programs

School districts can accumulate ideas for their bilingual-bicultural programs or learn how to start one by contacting the following school districts with programs in 1989-90.

Spanish

James Santy
Delavan-Darien School District
324 Beloit Road
Delavan, WI 53115

Audrey Hains
Kenosha School District
3600 52nd Street
Kenosha, WI 53142

Elena Chavez-Mueller
Madison Metro School District
545 W. Dayton School
Madison, WI 53703

John Benson
Marshall School District
P.O. Box 76
Marshall, WI 53559

Martha Lamelas and
Olga Valcourt-Schwartz
Milwaukee Public Schools
P.O. Drawer 10K
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Jay Clark
Palmyra-Eagle Area School District
709 Maple Street
Palmyra, WI 53156

Paula Boudreaux
Racine Unified School Distict
2220 Northwestern Avenue
Racine, WI 53404

Donovan Walling
Sheboygan Area School District
830 Virginia Street
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Carolos Gamino
Waukesha School District
222 Maple Avenue
Waukesha, WI 53186

Hmong

John Price
Appleton Area School District
P.O. Box 2019
Appleton, WI 54913

Clifford Stanford
Eau Claire Area School District
500 Main Street
Eau Claire, WI 54701

Alfred Block
Franklin School District
P.O. Box 307
Franklin, WI 53132

Jerry Whitehouse and
Fay Boerschlinger
Green Bay Area School District
P.O. Box 1387,
Green Bay, WI 54305

Sheldon Niquette
Kaukauna Area School District
509 Lawe Street
Kaukauna, WI 54130

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Howard Voss and
Mary Lein
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Donald Zimmermann
Manitowoc School District
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Manitowoc, WI 54220

Larry Chapman
Menomonie Area School District
718 N. Broadway Street
Menomonie, WI 54751

Jacqueline Servi Margis
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Milwaukee, WI 53201

Jeffrey Zdrale
Neenah School District
410 S. Commercial Street
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Stephen Fasching
Nekoosa School District
500 S. Section Street
Nekoosa, WI 54457

Douglas Straus
New Berlin School District
18695 W. Cleveland Avenue
New Berlin, WI 53151

Barbara Herzog
Oshkosh Area School District
P.O. Box 3048
Oshkosh, WI 54903

Donovan Walling
Sheboygan Area School District
830 Virginia Street
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Enery Babcock
Stevens Point School District
1900 Polk Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Beth Arnson
Superior School District
3025 Tower Avenue
Superior, WI 54880

Frank Helquist
Two Rivers School District
1500 27th Street
Two Rivers, WI 54241

Berland Meyer
Wausau School District
P.O. Box 359
Wausau, WI 54401

John Cain
West Bend School District
697 S. Fifth Avenue
West Bend, WI 53095

Jane Janquet
Wisconsin Rapids School District
510 Peach Street
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

Vietnamese, Lao, Khmer

Elena Chavez-Mueller
Madison Metro School District
545 W. Dayton Street
Madison, WI 53703

Olga Valcourt-Schwartz and
Jacqueline Servi Margis
Milwaukee School District
P.O. Drawer 10K
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Reaching the Single Parent

Today's families are changing dramatically. As of 1987, nearly 15 million children and youth live in single–parent homes. Twenty–four percent of children in America live with only one parent. Most single parent households are headed by women, but an increasing number of men are taking on the job of rearing their children alone.

Research by Bilge and Daufman, 1983, shows that single–father families were likely to be more comfortable financially than single–mother families.

Single parents may have difficulty balancing work and home. They may not have the support usually found in the traditional families. They may be trapped in a low poverty level; the unemployment rate for single mothers is about 40 percent higher than that for married mothers.

Tips for Teachers

- Cooperate with the work schedules of single parent families so that parents can meet their other demands.
- Conferences, home visits, and other parent-guardian gatherings should be scheduled to avoid conflicts with other responsibilities.
- Learn the laws relating to single parents, including parental rights regarding report cards.
- Do not assume that all parents have their own transportation or child care facilities.
- Avoid use of the terms, "broken home" and "stepparent."
- Use "Dear Parent or Guardian" not "Dear Parents" on letters.
- Offer an appropriate substitute for single parent children if working on Mother's Day and Father's Day activities.
- Know the custody situation in each family to know if duplicate letters and conferences need to be planned.
- Know that the transition to single parent family status often produces stress in children and parents. Be ready to listen. Discuss any behavior changes in children with the parent.
- Tell parents where they can find information about child development and parent support groups.
- Encourage your library to house a collection of cultural and pluralistic material native to America.
- Use single parent family representations in stories, examples, and pictures to show that the one–parent family structure is a valid one.
- Cooking and cleaning activities and nutrition education should be engaged in by all young children to avoid stereotyping of family tasks.

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Kids Need Help When Their Parents Remarry

Most single-parent families are transitional because most single or divorced parents remarry. The families created from remarriages are called "blended" families.

Researchers estimate that 60 percent of children born today will live in single parent households before they are 18, and 13 percent of all minor children are living with a remarried parent in a blended family.

Children Face Difficulties

Some children of blended families find the situation traumatic and need help when facing the changes of their parents' remarriage. In his book, "The Wedding: Adjusting to a Parent's Remarriage," author Lawrence Balter states that when children are born, they see their parents as a package deal and assume their parents will always be together. He says many children of divorced parents harbor a secret wish that their biological parents will get back together again, a wish that sometimes lasts for decades. When a parent remarries, that fantasy is destroyed.

Children may feel a sense of losing the parent to the new spouse, whom children may view as an intruder. Children may feel disloyal to the non-custodial parent if they accept the new spouse. Also, it is natural for children to want to be favored, and if another adult and more children enter the picture, children become concerned about their territory and status. Balter encourages parents to acknowledge these feelings, to talk to children about them, and to be sympathetic.

Teachers may find that dealing with children from these homes is different from dealing with those from traditional settings. Teachers and counselors should maintain their standards for these children while at the same time give some leeway during the transition time of their parents' divorce or remarriage. Schools should become safe places for children to express and explore their feelings and concerns. Teachers and counselors must become knowledgeable about communicating with all students and feel comfortable responding to all types of situations.

Realistic Expectations

Within blended families, certain conflicts may occur.

- Favoritism may tend to run along kinship lines when parents favor their own biological children.
- Discipline may be administered without enough authority because the stepparent may be compensating for fears of unfairness. On the other hand, disciplining a child may give rise to conflicts within the stepparent, resulting in a loss of control or abuse.
- Conflicts may arise when a child, who was given considerable freedom from a biological parent, now finds himself with a more authoritarian parent, or vice versa.

Source: Bryan Strong, author, and Christine Devault, co-author, of "The Marriage and Family Experience," West Publishing Company, 1983, 2nd ed.

How Divorce Affects Children

Over one million children in the United States each year face the divorce or separation of their parents. An article called "Divorce and Remarriage" from a Girl Scouts of U.S.A. publication discusses children's reactions, concerns about transferring schools, parents' attitudes, adjustment to family reorganization, and coping. This article can be found in the 1989-90 Families in Education packet for the month of May. In the May packet you also will find "Divorce: Parents' Rights and Children's Feelings."

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Fathers Involved in Child Care

The popular view of what a father can be has been changing. Fathers today play a crucial role, beyond that of breadwinner, in family functioning and child development.

The Benefits

If men do become more involved in child rearing, is that necessarily better than the traditional roles that seemed to work for our grandparents? There are pros and cons, but the benefits of such a change are difficult to ignore. First, a higher level of paternal involvement in child rearing is associated with benefits for children, especially sons, in the areas of intellectual growth, school performance, social development, self-esteem, and sex-role identity. Young boys' development of a firm male identity is enhanced by having a warm, nurturing, involved father, much more so than having a stereotyped macho father. Apparently, it is not the image of the man that counts, it is the quality of the relationship.

Second, a higher level of paternal child rearing is certainly a benefit to mothers. Women in this country have been increasing their outside employment since the turn of the century, without a budge in men's involvement in household tasks. Even in families where the mother works full-time, there is still often the expectation that she should carry the full load of homekeeping responsibilities.

Many men today, especially those with young children, report they would prefer to work fewer hours even if it meant less pay. They aren't rejecting the breadwinner role, but they say the breadwinner role isn't enough. They don't always have easy words to explain it, but they feel somehow incomplete, and they seek a life that fees whole . . . Fathers seek opportunities to express and fulfill the caring, nurturing sides of their natures. They don't like getting home from work every night after the kids have gone to bed.

Research suggests we should listen to these men because it looks like fatherhood is good for them as well as for their families. It engenders self-awareness and personal growth. And men who are more actively involved in the parental role gain more from it. They are more healthy emotionally and better adjusted.

Those are the benefits. Chief among the costs is the man's career. Men who increase their child rearing involvement often change their work hours or jobs to make it possible. The company knows it can no longer count on their 100 percent commitment, since they have tangibly shown they have an important commitment to their families. Career advancement is put on the slow track.

Relationship to Child Development

Father child rearing involvement is related to child development. One striking finding deserves note. When we looked at the frequency with which the father read to his child, or did other school-related activities, we found a strong positive relationship to the child's report card average and social competence. But only for sons. For daughters the same father measure was strongly related to a negative outcome, to the girl needing and receiving remedial help in school during the previous two years (kindergarten or first grade). I suspect that the men's high involvement with their daughters was a response to their daughters' problems.

Source: Dave Riley, Assistant Professor, Family Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Father's Play Is Key Role

Researches have found that there are numerous differences in the play of mothers and fathers with their children. Babies increase their excitement and turn off their engagement with their parents in different ways.

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For 3- to 5-year old girls and boys, fathers provide an important mirroring function. When fathers share positive views of their children, children learn to see themselves as others see them. In this way, important foundations for self image and sensitivity to other's reactions are laid.

In the elementary school years, fathers can provide a road toward more mature parent-child relations. Quite often fathers emphasize play when they are with their children. This provides links with the child's best way of relating, play, and contrasts with the dependency basis that is characteristically maintained by mothers. Fathers allow children an unacknowledged holding to dependency while translating human relationships into more grown up terms.

Fathers With Teens

Fathers can become an alternate parent with which teenage children can experiment with dependency and independence. This age can be especially difficult for a boy, who will normally feel frightened and in need of "holding" but who cannot, when his maleness is so important, reach out to his female parent. The preteens are a complicated time when strivings for separateness and independence go hand in hand with fears and desperate urges for help. Boys at this age often link more closely with their male parent, often by getting into conflict with their fathers. These conflicts often precede a time-limited, exclusive closeness with the father that is activities-oriented.

A father can be very helpful in the months prior to adolescence by sharing similar experiences that he had when he was a boy. This can be a valuable, face-saving opportunity to learn about confidence, impulse control, gender confusion, authority figures, and other important growing-up issues. It can also be a way to establish an accurate continuity with history of the generation before.

Source: Charles Schwarzbeck, Consultant to Families, University of Washington School of Medicine.

American Education Week

Activity Tips

The theme for American Education Week, November 11 to 17, is "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone." The following tips suggest school and community activities which encourage "everyone" to get involved in education.

- Hold an essay or poster contest in your school using the themes, "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone" or "A Teacher Who Made an Impact on Me." Ask the local newspaper for some space to print a few essays. Get permission to exhibit posters in the local bank, library, or other community buildings. Arrange for students to deliver their essays to local clubs.

- Ask students to write and practice ten-second public service announcements. Arrange for students to deliver these on the local radio station or the school's public address system.

- Take a group of students to visit a nutrition site at a time when most of the older persons are there (just before or after lunch time). Encourage students to ask older persons to share their talents, expertise, slides, hobbies, or history in the classroom.

- Sponsor a "Coffee with the Administrators" at a local cafe. Poynette school administrators invite community members to join them, saying, "You need not have a question to attend. Just pull up a chair and listen as school events, curriculum material, and recent board of education decisions are discussed."

- Designate Friday as "Children's Appreciation Day" in honor of all students. Teachers can perform skits. Faculty members can wear their college sweatshirts.

- Have students write and video tape television commercials for careers relating to education. The tapes could be playing in the lobby as parents come to an open house or parent-teacher conference. Suggest that the sales pitch includes not only developing the individual's skills and interests, but encouraging a sense of community and exploration of life from different perspectives.

- Businesses are valuable resources in efforts to improve parent and community participation. Form partnerships or Adopt-a-School programs with businesses that can send speakers to point out how skills are used by individuals in various jobs and can provide practice opportunities that focus on work-related areas (i.e., reading activities using job manuals, following directions, and researching professional journals).

- "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone" includes politicians. Form partnerships with the government by inviting legislators or the mayor to high school classrooms where they can answer students' questions about politicians' careers, lottery monies, state taxes, investment of deposited money, and other subjects.

- To receive suggestions on how everyone's educational needs can be met, place suggestion boxes in the community. To encourage people to write suggestions, hold a monthly drawing for a dinner for two at a restaurant. Make everyone who submits a suggestion eligible. Respond quickly to suggestions so people will know their ideas are adopted.

- Get college students involved in helping your school. Check with marketing and business instructors for help in organizing and implementing a school-community survey on parent needs.

- Clear off old news from school bulletin boards. Get rid of yellowed papers and things that focus too much on the past. Fill the bulletin boards with future projects, current

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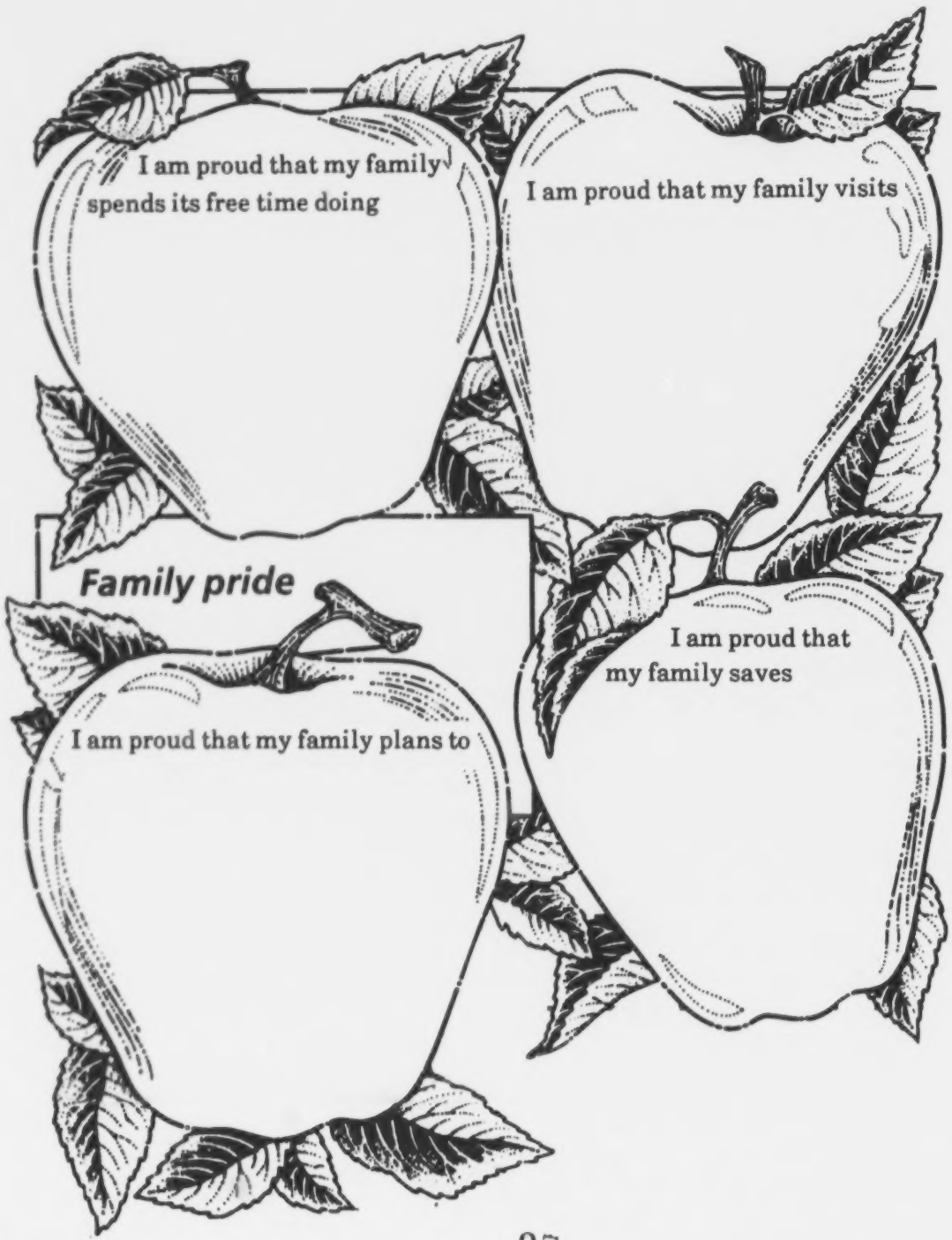
awards,and positive activities. For a change of pace, ask students to draw cartoons and comic strips with appropriate themes for the bulletin board.

- Using old magazines, ask students to cut pictures to make a collage which develops the theme, "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone." Discuss the many kinds of individuals and groups who could be involved in education. Display the collages in public buildings.
- Allow young adults who are former students of your school to become part of that "everyone" in the theme, "Educating Everyone Takes Every one." Invite young adults to the school to address students on the best ways to take advantage of a high school education or to help with athletic events and field trips. Many young adults can be reached at their work sites. Ask employers to post invitations on company bulletin boards or to include invitations from the school in pay check envelopes.
- Hold a classroom door decorating contest with educational themes chosen by students.

I'm Proud of My Family

What are some things your family does to bring family members closer together? Complete the following sentences that tell why you are proud of your family.


I am proud that my family spends its free time doing
I am proud that my family visits
Family pride
I am proud that my family saves
I am proud that my family plans to

Quotations

Family and Cultural Diversity

These quotations may be used in speeches and articles, as clip art, or as newsletter filler.

All men are equal; it is not birth but virtue alone, that makes the difference.

–Voltaire

The test of courage comes when in the minority; the test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority.

–Rev. Ralph W. Solkman

A multicultural approach to education serves the interests and preserves the self-esteem of all children from all cultures.

–Herbert J. Grover

If we were to select the most intelligent, imaginative, energetic, and emotionally stable third of mankind, all races would be represented.

–Franz Boas

Prejudice: A vagrant opinion without visible means of support.

–Ambrose Pierce

There was never in the world two opinions alike, no more than two hairs, or two grains. The most universal quality is diversity.

–Anonymous

The growth and diversity of family styles strongly impacts on our schools. Multicultural education will help children together live and work successfully in tomorrow's world.

–Herbert J. Grover

No one can be perfectly free until all are free; no one can be perfectly happy until all are happy; no one can be perfectly moral until all are moral.

–Herbert Spencer

Nor do I behold with prejudice the Italian, French, Spaniard or Dutch; but where I find their actions in balance with my own countrymen's, I honor, love, and embrace them in the same degree.

–Sir Thomas Browne

Prejudice is a device that enables you to form opinions without getting the facts.

–Robert Quillen

A mind is like a parachute. It only functions when open.

–Anonymous

Against the superiority of another, the only remedy is love.

–Goethe

Cultural acceptance is a condition of the heart and mind that teaches us to respect the beauty and variety of all peoples.

–Herbert J. Grover

I desire that there be as many different persons in the world as possible; I would have each one be careful to find out and pursue his own way.

–Henry David Thoreau

A child is not born loving or hateful. Love and hate are learned. We have to learn to use ourselves to teach young people to learn to love.

–Jack Frymier

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Family and Cultural Diversity

Reference to 1987-90

This listing of articles is included for easy cross-reference of materials related to this quarter's topic. References to 1987-88 -- The Year of the Family in Education are followed by references to 1988-89 -- The Families in Education Program: Our Children...Wisconsin Cares and references to 1989-90 -- The Year of Community Partnerships.

Following each list are letters denoting target audiences. The letters indicate the following:

A = Administrators
C = Community, Families in Education, and parent involvement committees
K = K-12 Staff
P = Parents

Reference to 1987-88 (Gold packet)

"Who Says Our Home is Broken?" September (K,P)

"Special Report: Family Togetherness," December (K,P)

"Families at Work," February (A,C,K,P)

"Special Report: When Parents Are at Work, Who Watches the Kids?" February (A,C,K,P)

"Classroom Activities: The Family at Work," February (K,P)

"Family Times: Family Meetings," March (P)

"Japanese and American Students: Comparisons and Contrasts," March (A,K,P)

"Promoting Family Pride," May (K,P)

Reference to 1988-89 (Green packet)

"Learning about Parenting," Dec. - Feb. (A,K,P)

"Teachers Reaching Out to Students and Parents," Dec. - Feb. (A,K,P)

"Tips for Teachers on Family Involvement," Dec. - Feb. (A,C,K,P)

"Family Involvement Takes Many Forms," June - Aug. (A,C,K,P)

Reference to 1989-90 (Red packet)

"Grandparents Are a Valuable Link in Building Family Strengths," February (K,P)

"Cultural Literacy," March (A,K,P)

"Developing Multi-Cultural Awareness in Children," March (K,P)

"Share the Hmong Culture in Your School," March (A,C,K,P)

"Understanding American Indian Culture and Values," March (A,C,K,P)

"Sharing African Cultures," March (A,C,K,P)

"Grandparents Put Life Into Traditions Which Enrich Our Culture," March (K,P)

"Divorce and Remarriage: How They Affect Children," May (A,K,P)

"Divorce: Parents' Rights and Children's Feelings," May (A,K,P)

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Resources

Libraries Can Help Support Family Literacy Activities

The Association for Librarians Serving Children (ALSC) recommended that the following publications be added to libraries.

First Steps to Literacy
The ALSC Preschool Services and Parent Education Committee prepared a book for children's librarians about planning and implementing programs for adults who live and work with children.

Books to Share: A Guide to Books for Children with Learning Differences
The Children with Special Needs Committee prepared a brochure listing books for families with learning-disabled children and for the children themselves.

Mildred L. Batchelder Award Books
This is a brochure listing the Batchelder Award books since the award was first given in 1968.

ALA's Guide to Classic Books for a Child's Home Library
This is a proposal for publication of a parent's guide to purchasing books for children.

Choosing Video for Children
ALSC and ALA Video with support from Carnegie funding have produced a video aimed at parents and caregivers on how to select videos for children. Christopher Reeves is the narrator.

The Newberry and Caldecott Awards: A Complete Listing of Medal and Honor Books 1990
This is an updated list of Newberry and Caldecott Books.

Professional Literature for Children's Librarians Bibliography
The ALSC Teachers of Children's Literature Discussion Group developed a select list of basic reading in Children's literature.

How to Raise a Reader
The Preschool and Parent Education Committee prepared a brochure for parents and caregivers including tips and reasons for introducing books to very young children, including a highly selective bibliography of books for the youngest child.

First Steps to Literacy
This book, aimed at children's librarians, helps plan and implement programs for adults who live and work with children.

Short Story Index for Young People, 1955-89
An index for young readers published by ALSC and ALA Publishing Services.

The USA Through Children's Books
This is a bibliography for the international participants of the 22nd Congress of the International Board on Books for Young People to be held in Williamsburg in September 1990.

Multicultural Children's Literature

The Cooperative Children's Book Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, printed a selected listing of books published between 1980-88 which deal with multicultural children's literature. The book, compiled by Ginny Moore Kruse and Kathleen T. Horning, can be ordered through the Children's Book Center, 4290 Helen C. White Hall, UW-Madison, 600 N. Park Street, Madison, WI 53706 (608)263-3720.

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SAMPLE INFORMATION RELEASE

(Adapt to your needs and retype on district letterhead.)

Local contact: (name, title, telephone number)

LOCAL SCHOOLS CELEBRATE AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

The (name of school district) is celebrating American Education Week November 11 to 17.

District Administrator (full name of district administrator) said, "We celebrate American Education Week to reaffirm our commitment to public schools. We recognize the critical role that education plays in the future of our country."

"Our schools rely not only on the dedication and skills of teachers and educational support staff, but on the encouragement and support of the entire community. We are grateful for help we receive from parents, businesses, and volunteers," said (last name of administrator).

The theme of American Education Week is "Educating Everyone Takes Everyone." State Superintendent Herbert J. Grover encourages schools to observe this week in a special way. "The needs of all children are met in a good educational system. Those schools are most successful that have their local communities mobilized behind efforts to improve school and community programs," said Grover who initiated the on-going Families in Education program in Wisconsin in 1987.

Local schools will be sponsoring special educational activities during American Education Week. (Mention some activities here. See sugestions in "American Education Week – – Activity Tips" in this Families in Education packet.)

Sample Public Service Announcement

(Adapt and retype on district letterhead.)

Approximately 30 seconds

American Education Week is celebrated in November. The Theme this year is "Educating Everyone . . . Takes Everyone." The staff of the _____ School District wants you to know that YOU are important in the success of students. Get involved in your children's schools . . . whether you are a parent, grandparent, retired citizen, business person, or young adult. Be part of that "everyone" that makes for educating everyone. Call your school and see how you can help.

###

Approximately 30 seconds

Has your community recently become more diverse in cultures and languages? Different families and cultures have their own unique ways of becoming involved in the education of their children. The staff of the _____ School District assumes that all parents want the best for their children. They invite parents of all cultures to become involved in the educational process. Visit your school to find out how you can help your children learn.

###

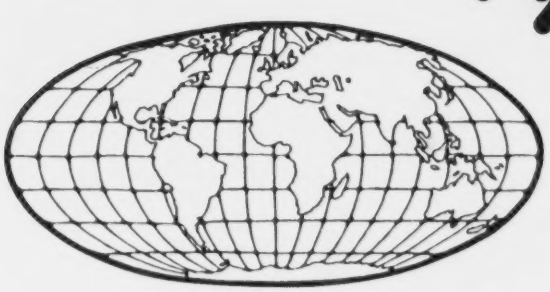
Approximately 10 seconds

There was never in the world two opinions alike . . . no more than two hairs, or two grains. The most universal quality is diversity. The _____ School District welcomes family and cultural diversity in its schools and community.

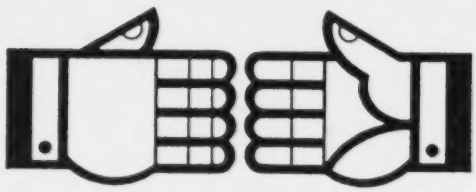
###

Families in Education
Educating Everyone Takes Everyone

First Quarter
Family and Cultural Diversity



A Winning Team!



Where the Action is . . .

Families in Education

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Second Quarter

Volunteerism and Community Service

Spotlight on Youth Community Service Programs
Taking the classroom into the community teaches youth how their educational experiences relate to real life. These organizational tips will help you design a program.

Youth and Older Adults . . . Let's Get Together at School
Intergenerational programs in schools can benefit youth and older adults. Eric Smith, School and Community Relations, DPI, lists some programs and benefits.

Tap Into Teen Activism
Teens need to feel they are part of a cause bigger than themselves. This article tells why to involve teens in community volunteerism and offers 22 ways to start.

Youth Input in Community Programs Is Important
This article explains why youth should be involved in adult committees. Kathlyn Schaaf, Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, tells how to train, motivate, support, and reward youth as they begin to participate in adult committees.

How to Start a Volunteer Program
These suggestions help school staff organize, maintain, motivate, and evaluate a volunteer program. Included are names of 12 successful school library volunteer programs.

Give Recognition to Volunteers (and Teachers, Parents, and Students)
Here are 40 ways to show appreciation to volunteers, as well as teachers, parents, and students. Everyone can do some of these brief suggestions, and volunteer coordinators in the schools may try them all.

Best Parent Involvement Ideas
These 35 tips for teachers and administrators were compiled by an elementary focus group who attended the 1989 National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education Conference held in Virginia.

Dear Parent: Be a School Volunteer
This letter invites parents and guardians to volunteer to work in school. It answers the questions: why volunteer? and what do volunteers do?

I Help My Community

This sheet can be duplicated and given to children to encourage them to help someone in their community.

Quotations

These quotations may be used in newsletters, articles, and speeches and on bulletin boards.

References to 1987-90

Use these convenient references to find related articles in the packets produced in 1987-88 (Year of the Family In Education), 1988-89 (Families in Education – Our Children . . . Wisconsin Cares), and 1989-90 (The Year of Community Partnerships).

Resources

Included are publications which provide additional avenues of information for parents, staff, and community.

Media Materials

Use the public service announcements and the press release as part of your public awareness campaign. Clip art is included for use in school newsletters, flyers, or other publications or for inclusion on items sent to parents and community members.

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Spotlight on Youth Community Service Programs

Teaching our youth about the real world is an important challenge facing all educators. Most would agree that the more we take the classroom into the community, the better students will learn to appreciate how their educational experiences relate to real life. In addition, these experiences help build self confidence, knowledge about the community, and a personal satisfaction in helping the community become a better place for all citizens.

New Programs Emerging

Recently emerging in Wisconsin and across the nation are many new efforts at promoting the role of youth as active partners in community improvement. Youth community service programs are worth looking at. The emerging model in several Wisconsin school districts is a board of education requirement that students in high school be required to do community service volunteer work as part of the graduation requirement. The Burlington, Manitowoc, Menasha, and Plymouth school districts have such requirements in place.

Organization Tips

It is important that students, teachers, administrators, and the community be active partners in planning a youth community service program. The following are some helpful hints on designing and organizing this type of program.

- Make sure that a volunteer experience is meaningful for both the student and community partner. Community service should be a meaningful learning experience, not busy work for students.

- Design experiences on a sustained basis rather than a one- time-only assignment.

- Link the community service experience directly to a regular instructional program in the school. One of the primary goals is to help the student see the connection between school work and community living. Teachers should be involved in the design and supervision of these experiences.

- Community service experiences should be tied to real community needs in which the volunteer can make a meaningful contribution. The program is not intended to be job training.

- Students themselves should be allowed maximum flexibility in choosing assignments and initiating contacts within a framework of school supervision and board policy. One of the purposes of the program is to encourage self-initiative and help build student confidence in seeking out meaningful community experiences.

Looking for more information on youth service ideas? One of the best contacts is the National Youth Service Leadership Council, 386 McNeal Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108 (612) 631-3672.

Source: Eric Smith, Consultant, School and Community Relations, Department of Public Instruction, Madison, WI.

Youth and Older Adults: Let's Get Together at School!

Intergenerational programs – bringing youth and older adults together – can become a "natural" in schools. An intergenerational partnership

- brings experience to those who need experience.
- creates mutual understanding through dialog and face to face contact.
- promotes school as a learning center for all ages.
- promotes positive youth images to older adults.
- brings the lessons of the past and real life experiences into the classroom.
- offers older adults an opportunity to contribute.

Intergenerational Programs

Intergenerational programs are as varied as each school chooses. Some tried-and-true programs include the following:

Tutors: Older adults act as reading or math tutors for students needing special help.

Aging seminars: Dialogs take place between older adult panels and social studies classes on various topics, such as growing old, problems of aging, and youth/older adult communication and understanding.

Folk fairs: Demonstrations of past skills and crafts (chair caning, butter churning, quilt making, whittling, etc.) are presented by older adults.

Adopt-a-grandparent: Students write to older adults, visit them in nursing homes, or plan potlucks with them.

Community history projects: Students interview older adults – with written notes, tape recorder, or video camera – in order to compile a community history.

Community theater: Plays are produced by combined youth/older adult performers.

Older adults as teaching partners: Match the skills of older adults with classroom units in shop, art, homemaking, and other classes.

How to Get Started

The question is how to get started. Contact your local county Commission on Aging for information on linking up with older adult volunteer programs, such as RSVP (Retire Senior Volunteer Program). Form a study committee, bring in appropriate resource persons from area agencies, and design a pilot program in your school. Two good contacts at the state level include:

Community and Family Involvement
WI Department of Public Instruction
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Dane County Retired Senior Volunteers
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Madison, WI 53705

Source: Eric Smith, Consultant, School and Community Relations, Department of Public Instruction, Madison, WI.

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Tap Into Teen Activism

Altruism is on the rise in teen groups, and schools should tap into it. The need for volunteers is enormous in most communities. But even if the need were not great, there are good reasons for teens to become involved.

Why Involve Teens?

- Teens need to feel they are part of a cause bigger than themselves.
- Teens need to see that their school gives meaning to the principle that in a democratic society community involvement is both a right and a responsibility.
- Teens need to know that they are needed in their communities and that they can start projects which will have a lasting influence in the community's growth or environment.
- Teens need to feel the satisfaction and confidence that goes along with being a leader and organizer if they are to become future motivators and leaders.
- Teens need to get involved in a cause in which they feel they have made a change, not just talk about a change.

Community Involvement

Getting teens involved in their communities is a process that involves four "in's," according to Roger Hiemstra in *The Educative Community:*

- IN – Sponsor activities that will get the people of the community into the schools and the students into the community.
- INTERESTED – Get students interested in their own problems and the problems of the community and get community members interested in the schools.
- INFORMED – Help the community become knowledgeable about what is happening in the schools and help students understand that responsible citizens must be concerned with their communities.
- INVOLVED – Ask people to help and to assume leadership roles in various educational endeavors and involve the school and its students in various facets of community life.

Teens Can Practice Community Citizenship

With the help of adults, teens could get involved in some of these activities:

- Tutor young students.
- Help in the office or classrooms.
- Start or assist local recycling programs.
- Assist in child care centers.
- Write letters for the sick or elderly.
- Adopt-a-business and work with business people to benefit the school.
- Coach a young baseball team at a local park.
- Write a grant for funds for a needed local environment clean-up.
- Participate in school governance.
- Get involved in political action groups.
- Attend a school board meeting.
- Contribute to the school newspaper.
- Register to vote (if 18).
- Improve the school environment.
- Help new students or ethnic groups feel welcome.
- Tape personal history talks of older citizens.
- Start a travel club and contact community members who will share their traveling experiences and slides.
- Design invitations for businesses and the elderly to attend a school program.
- Conduct a tall tales contest and tape entries from the community.
- Set up a book swap-shop in one of the classrooms or library.
- Compile a list of guest speakers in the community.
- Videotape a classroom demonstration for parents who cannot visit the school or who do not understand the English language.

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Youth Input in Community Programs Is Important

When adults work in programs designed to help young people, there is no better way to develop real understanding and success than to work hard at developing youth participation.

Making youth participation work involves four steps:

- Finding young people who want to get experience and learn skills.
- Providing strong orientation and training.
- Structuring committee meetings to encourage participation of all members.
- Providing on-going support for youth at committee functions and in the local community, school, and family.

Finding Youth Members

Here are some tips for adult committee members who wish to include young people in their committees.

- Talk about WHY you want youth participation.
- Beware of "token" participation.
- Choose at least three or four youth so they have safety in numbers.
- Avoid choosing the same youth that all other committees want. There are many young people with potential that can be developed.
- Youth members should be drawn from the same cross-section of the neighborhoods or regions as the adult members.
- Decide what special needs and interests you want represented among the youth members.
- Give youth tasks that are concrete and interesting to challenge them and allow for development of skills.
- Decide whether you are willing to listen to youth and let them have equal power and responsibility. Realize that building a peer relationship takes a willingness to learn from and sometimes to be corrected by young people.

To find youth who may be willing to participate, contact school principals, counselors, and teachers. Be sure to spell out your needs in terms of background , skills, experience, and interest. Ask them to provide support within the school structure for youth participation and to reward youth for their involvement.

Also, contact community and youth organizations, human services agencies, and churches that already work with young people of all ages. Some of these groups – like the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and 4-H Clubs – have already trained their youth members in the essential skills of participation in meetings and would probably welcome the opportunity to send youth representatives to an adult committee.

Be sure to stress the basic requirements with anyone you contact and share your expectation that this involvement may be worth special recognition, such as awards and merit badges within the group.

Provide Training and Orientation for Youth

Once you have identified the initial youth members for participation in your committee, you should carefully plan an initial training and orientation for them. You cannot just invite them to your meeting and expect them to participate immediately in a meaningful way. They need to meet with the adult members and receive some orientation and training. The initial training should be informal, non-threatening, and fun. It should include the following:

- *Introductions*. Each youth and adult member should introduce themselves and have the opportunity to talk about their own interests, experiences, and needs. An informal introduction with participants seated in a circle is a good way to begin.
- *Warm-Up Exercises*. These are relaxing, fun games that the whole group can do together. They usually involve movement, laughter, and communication and are a good way to make people feel welcome and comfortable.

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• *Information*. Adult committee members should give a short and simple explanation of the history, mission, goals, and activities of the committee. Avoid using complicated language and acronyms. Use creative graphics and audio-visual aids to train the group. Include new and difficult words and ideas with which the committee regularly works. Keep paper materials to a minimum.
• *Small Group Involvement*. Discuss concrete roles and tasks for youth members in small groups of five to seven persons of mixed youth and adults. Allow young people to talk about what they LIKE to do, what they DO WELL, and what INTERESTS them about the committee's functions. With some guidance from adults, they usually can identify a concrete and comfortable place to start. Develop small, short-term tasks with which to start.
• *Overview*. Summarize the upcoming events, dates, locations, tasks, and responsibilities. Ask for questions and be sure the atmosphere is conducive to questions from youth. Thank your new members for their involvement and check to see if they have transportation to the next meeting.

Structure of Meetings

Follow these suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the entire committee.
• *Arrange a group of youth and adults* into small groups of five to seven to get responses from every member.
• *Ask each group to choose a leader* and recorder.
• *Use brainstorming rules* to get input from each member. This means that everyone is encouraged to think of wild ideas, many ideas coming out in rapid succession, building on other's ideas, and no passing of judgement or evaluation on ideas. Youth must feel free to suggest imaginative, new, silly, foolish ideas without worrying about defending them. Later, combining or modifying the ideas may lead to new ideas that are superior to the initial ideas.
• *Ask each group to report* their recommendations to the large group.
• *Do more than talk*. Take a good look at your mission and find ways to accomplish tasks by assigning specific roles for each member. This kind of subcommittee structure can help promote personal involvement.
• *The meeting room should be comfortable*, warm, and bright. Tables should be arranged in a way to promote interaction among people.
• *Refreshments* should meet the needs of all members as well as providing some nutrition and energy. Avoid meetings where adults enter a cocktail lounge at the end of the meeting as this is not a good role model for youth.

On-going Support

Adults must be sensitive to the different needs and lifestyles of young people. Most of them are not earning an income, cannot drive, cannot leave school without permission, are accountable to parents for their time and activities, have never worked on an adult committee, and lack the communication skills to work in a group.

For these reasons, on-going support for the youth members of the committee is CRITICAL. Without sensitive support at home and on the committee, no amount of training and structure will make youth participation work. Support can come in the following forms:
• *Caring and sharing*. Nurture the youth membership by being a warm and caring friend. Take time to talk with them, ask for their input, answer their questions, and do fun things that both youth and adults enjoy. Treat young people like the valuable resource and real people that they are.
• *Adult partners*. Let each adult on the committee "adopt" a youth partner to be the liaison between the committee and the family/school. Provide on-going support and information which will make parents and school personnel feel better about the experience. Adult partners can also provide transportation to meetings and consistent companionship if the youth

wants it.

- *Expenses*. Since young people are seldom on anyone's payroll, the adults need to provide transportation, lodging, and meals. Even the traditional expense voucher could leave a youth with serious problems, since reimbursement may not be coming for many weeks. Be sensitive to this issue and discuss it early.
- *Rewards and recognition*. Find a way to reward young people's participation. Some ways to show recognition are through school credits, announcing youth appointments in the newspaper, T-shirts and buttons, or simply ask them what kind of reward they would like.
- *Letters of introduction*. Send a letter of introduction to the young people's parents and school principals, spelling out the requirements of the commitment and stressing the importance of skills and experience the committee hopes to provide.

Source: Kathlyn (Thorp) Schaaf, Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, 1983, Madison, WI.

How to Start a Volunteer Program

Parents and senior citizens are largely untapped resources for schools, yet many of them would be willing to help if asked. A volunteer program in the school can

- reinforce the instruction of teachers.
- enrich the educational opportunities of children.
- supplement the curriculum by making available the talents and resources of the community.
- broaden community understanding of school needs and goals.
- promote school-community relations.

How to Start

These suggestions on how to start a volunteer program are adapted from *School Volunteer Program*, National School Volunteer Program, Inc., 300 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

- *Examine your needs*. How can school volunteers help?

- *Investigate the climate*. Do teachers want to work with volunteers?

- *Talk to representatives* of the groups you want to involve in the school volunteer program. These include the school board, teachers, librarians, PTA/PTO, senior citizen groups, Chamber of Commerce, local service clubs, university extension, human services agencies, and local businesses. Ask them if you can attend a meeting of the organization to make your pitch.

- *Approach the organizations well in advance* of the time you would like the volunteers -- about three or four months. Be specific about the kind of support and the number of volunteers you need.

- *Provide a brief article* for the organization's newsletter and follow-up your request with a letter of thanks.

Plan Goals and Organization

- *Select goals* for your volunteer program that have specific, measurable objectives, for example, if your goals are to raise student achievement in reading and math, reduce absenteeism in high school, or improve the community's attitudes and involvement in schools, how will you know whether these goals have been achieved?

- *Establish a system for recording volunteer hours* and types of contributions. Use the data to tell the community of your program's achievements and degree of involvement.

- *Plan the organization*. Write a job description for the districtwide school volunteer coordinator and decide what skills this person should have. Determine who will interview and screen volunteer applicants. Who will coordinate the volunteer program within each individual school? Who will receive the teachers' requests for volunteer assistance?

- *Write job descriptions* for all the tasks for which volunteers will be sought. Teachers and librarians should list what kinds of help they want and at which hours of which days.

- *Get written school board support* for the school volunteer program. This support gives the program added prestige in the community. The volunteer coordinator should make periodic reports to the school board.

- *Learn the health requirements* for school volunteers, such as tubercular skin tests or chest x-rays. Perhaps you can arrange to have volunteers take the test at one site or arrange for transportation to a health clinic.

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• *Check on state policies* relating to volunteers. Can volunteers ride the school bus, receive insurance coverage, serve in their own child's classroom, bring preschool children along on days they work at school, or receive free school lunches?

Maintain Volunteer Recruitment and Morale

• *Plan recruitment strategies.* Some school volunteer programs produce their own leaflets and posters; some send letters to parents of students; some leave printed bookmarks in the local library. Find out where other community agencies get volunteers and how and where other school volunteer programs recruit.

• *Maintain volunteer morale.* The coordinator must keep in touch with volunteers and teachers who participate in the program and provide ways for them to meet and discuss the program. Volunteer appreciation and recognition take many forms: teacher's thank you, notes from students, formal recognition ceremonies and dinners, honor certificates, and workshop attendance.

• *Motivate volunteers.* Job satisfaction is the best motivator; be sure the volunteer is matched well with the job. Invite volunteers to the school's social functions. Give more challenging work to volunteers who desire it; for example, volunteers may want to learn word processing to help with their work. A verbal thank you or short notes of praise sent to each volunteer are simple but effective ways of showing appreciation and building motivation.

Evaluation

• *Plan for a continuing evaluation* of the program. Many of the results of a good school volunteer program cannot be measured -- the change in a child's attitude toward learning, improvement in a student's self-image, the warmth of the volunteer-child relationship -- but all participants in the program should be asked to evaluate the program from their own point of view. Evaluation should discover if the program's specific goals are being reached.

• *Establish a communications system.* Communications should include: a) personal and phone contact with coordinators and other program staff members; b) meetings for volunteers to discuss their service and learn about the program and other opportunities; c) a school volunteer newsletter or column in the school newsletter sent to all volunteers and program participants; and d) an annual report from the school board that the program "makes a difference."

School Library Volunteer Programs That Work

Contact these library media specialists and ask them how they recruited and kept volunteers in their school library volunteer programs.

Gail Burgess
Bristol Consolodated Public Schools
20121 83rd Street
Bristol, WI 53104

Trudy Trapp
Campbellsport High School IMC
Campbellsport,WI 53101

Norma Hessling
Deerfield Public School
300 Simonson Blvd.
Deerfield, WI 53531

Carolyn Servais
Little Chute ublic School
1402 N. Freedom Road
Little Chute, WI 54140

Ralph Wehlitz
Merrill High School
Polk Street
Merrill, WI 54452

Ramona Laughlan
Monticello High School IMC
312 S. Main Street
Monticello, WI 53570

Nancy Christensen
West High School IMC
11400 W. Center Street
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

David Quinlan
Marquette School
317 Dorelle Street
Kewaunee, WI 54216

Jo Hewitt
Ben Franklin Elementary School
N81 W14701, Franklin Drive
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051

Mill Meythaler
Merton Elementary School IMC
6881 Main Street
Merton, WI 53056

Tonra Degner
South Elementary School
Reedsburg, WI 53959

Nancy Christensen
West High School IMC
11400 W. Center Street
Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Give Recognition to Volunteers . . . (and Teachers, Parents, and Students)

Almost everyone appreciates recognition for a job well done. Showing appreciation to volunteers (and teachers, parents, and students) is necessary if they are to continue to perform on a level of efficiency and contentment. Here are 40 ways to show recognition and sensitivity toward volunteers in school.

- Smile
- Greet by name
- Send a birthday card
- Say "We missed you"
- Take time to talk
- Promote a Volunteer of the Month program
- Surprise with coffee and cake
- Say "Good morning"
- Maintain safe working conditions
- Have a volunteer suggestion box
- Arrange for discounts
- Award plaques to sponsoring club/group
- Take time to explain fully
- Say "Good afternoon"
- Hold rap sessions
- Place recognition article in newsletter
- Give adequate orientation
- Invite to school functions
- Say "Thank you"
- Send letter of appreciation to employer
- Nominate for volunteer awards
- Welcome to staff coffee breaks
- Encourage administrators to talk with them
- Ask for a report
- Be pleasant
- Give them challenging jobs
- Send a Thanksgiving Day card
- Hold rap sessions
- Say "Good Night"
- Enlist to train other volunteers
- Send a holiday card
- Use as consultants
- Enable to grow on the job
- Enable to grow out of the job
- Maintain file of volunteers
- Provide in-service training
- Have a public reception
- Give additional responsibility
- Provide a nursery
- Respect their preferences

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Best Parent Involvement Ideas

Productive and practical ideas resulted from the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education Conference held in Virginia in October 1989 which was attended by a Wisconsin DPI Families in Education representative. After the conference, a summary of the best parent involvement ideas were compiled by an elementary school focus group spearheaded by John H. Wherry, president of The Parent Institute and publisher of *Parents Make the Difference*. Here are 35 suggestions.

- *Remember the three F's* for success in planning activities for parent involvement: Families, Food, Fun. Try a "Victorian Day" for fun dress-up, food, and fellowship.
- *Note the one-third rule:* If you can get a cross-section of one-third of your parents involved in the school, you can effect change.
- *Accept the fact* that some parents will never come to school. They can still help by being supportive at home.
- *Go into the community*. Remove the intimidation factor. Get face-to-face with parents in their homes, on the job, or other neutral settings like the public library, restaurant, community center, or work site.
- *Establish a parents' room or corner* in the school. Be sure the entire staff makes parents feel welcome. Let parents come in after school, bringing their children if necessary, to learn about skills their children need to work on.
- *During parent conferences* do two things: say some positive things about every child and extend school lunch invitations to each parent.
- *Hold parent conferences at the workplace* or ask business leaders to give their employees one-half day off work for parents to visit the school.
- *Write newsletters at fourth to sixth grade level* for easy reading.
- *Include all school personnel* (bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, etc.) at in-service meetings and school appreciation dinners.
- *Stress a Kids Come First* philosophy at school and at home, and follow through at budget proposal time.
- *Print newsletters that will be read.* Make them one sheet of paper, front and back. If you have more news, send more frequent newsletters. Keep articles short. Pass the "dollar bill" test: anywhere you lay a dollar bill on the page, it should touch something eyecatching – a headline, a drawing or other illustration, bold faced type, bullets, etc.
- *Use a color other than white for newsletters.* It will get more attention.
- *Find translators* to put school communications into parents' languages.
- *Have children write newsletters*. Each day let children summarize their activities as a class project, writing the summary on the chalkboard. These daily reports go on one sheet of paper to go home on Friday. The children can read this newsletter to their parents.
- *Provide cable TV programs* and teacher-produced videotapes to provide parent information. Tapes can be sent home to show parents what is being taught and expected.
- *Present videos at first PTA/PTO meetings* in the school or classroom. Hold small group sessions to go over school rules and expectations with parents.
- *Help parents get their GED*. Put them in touch with a counselor who can give them necessary information.
- *Set up parent partners*. Pair parents whose children are not yet in school with parents who do have children there. Remember new families moving into the school district.
- *Hold parent workshops* at school or other locations covering diverse topics on child development. Set appropriate times so parents can attend.

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- *Hold an overnight read-in* with community and parent involvement. Invite good readers and reluctant readers. Families spend the whole night at school participating in reading activities, sleep in sweat suits and sleeping bags on the gym floor, and eat breakfast at school.
- *Give incentives to classrooms* with the best participation of parents at parent-teacher conferences.
- *Share objectives for grade level* with parents. They can be listed on charts during open house and sent home with children.
- *Enlist the principal's help in targeting parents* who need to be involved and go pick them up by car.
- *Check out new computer technology* using electronic mailboxes to facilitate communication between parents and teachers. Teachers can record messages for parents quickly at convenient times. Parents can return calls or record messages when it is convenient for them.
- *Facilitate parent networking* by meeting at churches/synagogues, town halls, or public housing facilities. Consider satellite PTA/PTO meetings.
- *Set up peer helpers* – student to student, parent to parent.
- *Involve the district administrator* in answering calls from parents and working with community groups to involve parents.
- *Identify the necessities for parents of at-risk children* to be able to participate in parenting programs. Find ways to meet those needs – transportation, child care, pregnancy information, Head Start programs, more easily understood materials, and translations. Find people who can help families identify problems and make connections with agencies that can help.
- *Hold appreciation dinners* for volunteers and promote multi-cultural education through pot-lucks.
- *Communicate with parents before school starts* to establish a positive tone.
- *Try a Homework Hotline* or Dial-A-Teacher program to provide assistance with homework.
- *Start a foster grandparent program* pairing a child and a senior citizen for reading or homework.
- *Try radio spots* or local weekend shows to address parent concerns, announcements, and helpful hints.
- *Try a parent breakfast*, such as Muffins for Mom or Donuts for Dad, to get parents into the classroom/school.
- *To keep parent volunteers*, make them welcome and keep them busy.

Be A School Volunteer

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Most people think education is important. They think a person's happiness and success depend a great deal upon the kind of education received. If you are one of these people, you may want to help provide the kind of quality education children need. You can help children learn–as a VOLUNTEER.

WHY Should You Volunteer?

- *Your children will benefit.* Even if you are not in their classrooms, your children will know you are in school . They will know you think learning is important, too.
- *You will get to know your children's teachers.* Knowing the teachers makes it easier to ask for their help when your children need special help.
- *The school will benefit.* Your time in school will free school staff to spend more time with children, and that means better learning in your school.
- *The community will benefit.* You will become more familiar with the schools goals and needs and can talk about them to others in your community.
- *Volunteering is easy.* Many schools offer training to volunteers. There are jobs that can be done at home or in school, and on week days or weekends.
- *Volunteering is satisfying.* You meet other parents. You may learn new skills. You get a good feeling from knowing you've done something important.

Volunteers can do many things to help children or teachers

- work with one student or a small group of students
- work at the elementary or secondary level
- read stories to children or listen to them read
- chaperon field trips, dances, bus trips
- help with math or art skills
- keep score or time at athletic events
- work in the library or office
- share a special skill or knowledge
- type the school or classroom newsletter
- call parents to attend conferences

_____
Teacher

_____
Telephone

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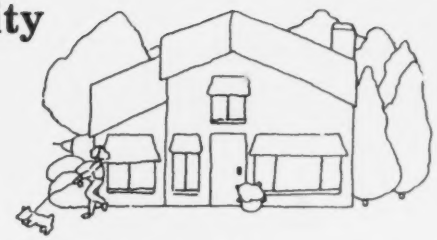
I Help My Community

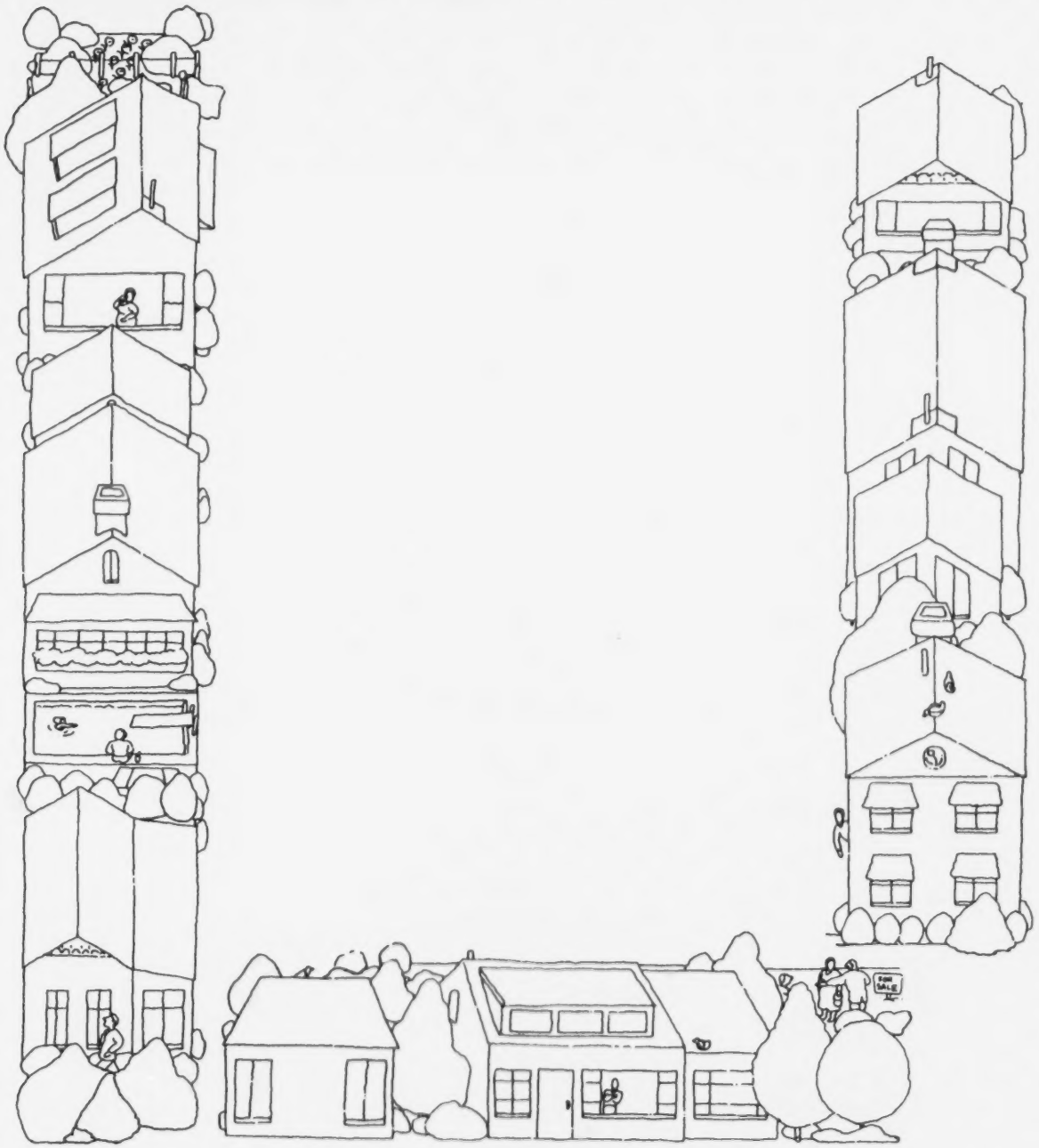


I help myself and my family.

I help my friends and my school.

Now I am ready to help my community.

With words or pictures show how you can help someone in your community.



Quotations

Volunteerism and Community Service

These quotations may be used in speeches and newsletters or as clip art.

Those who act receive the prizes.

–Aristotle

Volunteers of all ages are welcome in our schools, not only parents, grandparents, and business people, but also young people who have graduated from school and are employed in the community. These young adults have strengths and skills which can influence school children in a positive way.

–Herbert J. Grover

You have to pay your dues if you wish to belong to the society in which you live.

–Anonymous

The best portions of one's life (are) his little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love.

–Wordsworth

All the other pleasures of life seem to wear out, but the pleasure of helping others in distress never does.

–Anonymous

In the humblest mortal there is a throne room. Its door unfolds silently, magically, whenever one dares to be creatively useful; to benefit his kind by breaking new paths, building new structures, awakening new deeds, and restoring new ideals.

–Goethe

Philanthropy is almost the only virtue which is sufficiently appreciated by mankind.

–Walden

School volunteers give children the gift of time and self. Volunteers merchandise their generosity and receive in return the satisfaction that they have done something important for children.

–Herbert J. Grover

That action is best which procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers.

–Anonymous

I refer those actions which work out for the good of the agent to courage, and those which work out for the good of others to nobility.

–Spinoza

Our grand business, undoubtedly, is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.

–Carlyle

A youth community service program assists students in realizing that they are invaluable individuals who have a great deal to contribute to the community.

–Herbert J. Grover

Great actions speak great minds, and such should govern.

–John Fletcher

The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity.

Benjamin Disraeli

We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Volunteerism and Community Service Month

References to 1987-90

This listing of articles is included for easy cross-reference of materials related to this quarter's theme. References to 1987-88 -- The Year of the Family in Education are followed by references to 1988-89 -- Families in Education: Our Children...Wisconsin Cares and to 1989-90 -- The Year of Community Partnerships.

Following each listing are letters denoting target audiences. The letters indicate the following:

A = Administrators
C = Community, Families in Education, and parent involvement committees.
K = K-12 staff
P = Parents

References to 1987-88 (Gold packet)

"Involving the Entire Community: A Sure Road to Support," October (A,C,K,P)
"Business Programs," February (A,C,K)
"Students Promote Involvement," March (K,P)
"Involvement Is an Education," March (K,P)
"Activities Are Fun and Rewarding," March (K,P)
"Burlington Parents Get Involved," April (A,C,K,P)
"Involvement Pays Off," May (A,C,K,P)
"Community Education: Communities and Schools Working Together, May (A,C,K,P)
"Ideas for Activities for Retired Persons," May (A,C,K,P)

Reference to 1988-89 (Green packet)

"School-Community Networks," Sept. – Nov. (A,C,K,P)
"Community Education Partnerships, "Sept. – Nov. (A,C,K,P)
"Community Gets Involved in Curriculum," Dec. – Feb. (A,C,K,P)
"Teens Benefit from Community Service," Mar. – May (C,K,P)
"Friends Helping Friends Program -- Teenagers Make a Difference," Mar. – May (A,C,K,P)
"Should Your Teenager Work?" Mar. – May (K,P)
"Family Involvement Takes Many Forms," June – Aug. (A,C,K,P)

Reference to 1989-90 (Red packet)

"Setting Up a Parent Network," Sept. (A,C,K,P)
"Community Partners for Youth Leadership," Sept. (A,C,K)
"Citizenship and Leadership Activity," Sept. (A,K)
"Developing Family/School Partnerships," Oct. (A,C,K)
"Want Involved Parents? Try the Family Forum," Oct. (A,C,K)
"Maximize the Education Options for Your Community," Oct. (A,C,K)
"The Power of Community Service," May (A,C,K,P)
"The Goals of Community Service," May (A,C,K,P)
"Youth Community Service Projects Which Have Worked," May (A,K)
"School-Business Partnerships Help Students and Economy," May (A,C,K)
"Community Business Leaders Help Students Succeed," May (A,C,K)

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Resources

Publications

Community Education: Building Learning Communities. National Community Education Association, 119 North Payne Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

This 20-page booklet examines why communities are effective in solving their problems. It addresses the issues of schools as community centers and community education's goals, principles, funding, public relations, and program components.

Volunteers in Public Schools. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, D.C. 1990.

This 150-page publication outlines the development of organized school volunteerism in the United States, reviews the research and literature on school volunteerism, addresses the factors in volunteerism, and lists 13 exemplary volunteer programs in the United States.

Improving Opportunities for Underachieving Minority Students: A Planning Guide for Community Action. Dissemination Office, Center for the Study of Evaluation, UCLA Graduate School of Education, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1522. $11 plus $2.50 postage.

This 47-page publication is a guide to help mobilize the community behind efforts to create or improve community programs for at-risk minority students; lists nine steps to build a community coalition.

School Safety. National School Safety Center Newsjournal. Spring 1990. National School Safety Center, 16830 Ventura Blvd., Suite 200, Encino, CA 91436. (818)377-6200.

The Spring 1990 issue of "School Safety" explores the importance of parent participation in schools, validating the benefits of parent involvement. The issue showcases success stories of schools where parents are an integral part of the educational process and addresses the challenges of reaching single parent families and recent immigrants who speak little English.

Equity Coalition/Programs for Educational Opportunity. 1005 School of Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259. (313)763-9910.

The Volume 1 Number 2 Spring 1990 issue presents an overview of parent involvement activities, parent involvement in gender equity, African American parents, and a list of model parent involvement programs.

Research Papers

Youth and American's Future. Institute for Educational Leadership, Suite 310, 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20036-5541.

These working papers were prepared for deliberations of the William T. Grant Foundation's Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship. They provide insights and shortcuts for researchers in the youth field. The relationships between youth (16- to 24-year olds) and schools, families, employers, and communities are explored, with particular attention to the non-college-bound. $10 each. The titles are:

"Youth Transition from Adolescence to the World of Work" by Garth L. Magnum.

This paper summarizes labor market realities, employer expectations, parental influences, and the difficulties young adults experience as they move into the work world. It highlights vocational education, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training opportunities available for youth.

"Youth and the Workplace: Second Chance Programs and the Hard- to-Serve" by Thomas J. Smith, Gary C. Walker, and Rachel A. Baker.

This paper details second-chance education, training, and employment programs; includes appendix of model programs and policy recommendations.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction/Herbert J. Grover, State Superintendent/125 South Webster Street/P.O. Box 7841/Madison, Wisconsin 53707/(608) 266-1771

"Who Will Train and Educate Tomorrow's Workers? The Financing of Non-College-Bound Young Workers' Recurrent Education" by Robert Sheets, Andrew Hahn, Robert Lerman, and Erik Butler.

This paper advocates the need for universal recurrent education and discusses practical ways of achieving expanded post-secondary opportunities for non-college youth and ways to close the gap between education and work.

"The Interaction of Family, Community, and Work in the Socialization of Youth" by Stephen F. Hamilton.

This paper explores the connections among family, community, and the workplace as they interact with young people; calls for establishing intentional policy among these areas to support their separate but interconnected roles in socializing youth.

"Communities and Adolescents: An Exploration of Reciprocal Supports" by Joan Wynn, Harold Richman, Richard A. Rubenstein, and Julia Littell.

This paper identifies the variety of community supports that can be made available to adolescents if communities decide to make youth a priority. The appendix includes 22 studies describing the differing impacts of community supports on adolescents.

Organizations

Volunteers of America of Wisconsin, Inc.
W255 N499 Grandview Blvd., Suite 310
Waukesha, WI 53188
(414)524-8533
Contact: Richard E. Carlson

School and Community Relations
Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster St.
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
(608) 266-3569
Contact: Eric Smith

National Center for Community Education
1017 Avon St.
Flint, Michigan 48503
(313) 238-0463
Contact: Duane Brown or Shane Tiedeman

National Community Education Association
119 North Payne St.
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 683-6232
Contact: Mary Boo or Linda Moore

Center for Parent/Community Participation
San Diego County Department of Education
Rm.407
6401 Linda Vista Road
San Diego, CA 92111
(619) 292-3620
Contact: Janet Chrispeels

Harvard Family Research Project
Longfellow Hall
13 Appian Way
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
(617) 495-9109
Contact: Heather Weiss

SAMPLE INFORMATION RELEASE

(Adapt to your needs and retype on district letterhead)

Local Contact: (name, title, telephone

SCHOOL DISTRICT TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers at (name of school district) who "make a difference" will be recognized on (date) at a district-wide (picnic, dinner, fair, program).

The (name of school district) received (number of hours) hours of volunteer work last year from its (number of volunteers) volunteers who tutor children, assist teachers in the classroom, and do clerical work. School volunteers include (names of volunteers.)

"Our volunteers include parents, grandparents, senior citizens, business people, high school students, college students, and young adults in the community," said District Administrator (name of administrator). "They contribute to the academic and extracurricular excellence of our schools. Our volunteer program is successful because of the generosity and cooperation of the volunteers who work together for the good of the school, and we are taking this opportunity to thank them publicly," (he/she) added.

The event is part of the (name of district) School District's Families in Education program, an initiative started four years ago by State Superintendent Herbert J. Grover to encourage and promote family involvement in education.

Superintendent Grover encourages volunteerism in the schools. "Volunteers have a vested interest and fee a sense of ownership and pride in their schools. Volunteerism in schools is enhanced because the contributions help children," said Grover.

The ceremony will be held at (time) in (room) at (name of building). The public is invited to attend. (If the event is not a dinner or picnic, add: Refreshments will be served afterwards.)

Sample Public Service Announcement

(Adapt and retype on district letterhead)

Approximately 30 seconds

Have you ever thought of volunteering to help at your school district? The _____ School District needs parents, grandparents, retired citizens, business people, and young adults. Volunteering is easy. Volunteering is fun. You can share your knowledge and skills with children, and benefit your school. And you may learn a few new skills, too. You'll feel you've done something important. Call your school now and ask how you can help.

###

Approximately 30 seconds

The following message is for young adults. If you have graduated from high school a couple years ago, you may be ready to come back to school – not as a student, but as a volunteer. The _____ School District hopes you will help kids in your community by volunteering to help in the classroom, on the playing field, or with special school events – or by sharing your skills. Volunteering is easy and fun. Get involved – it's never too late to make a difference. Call your school soon.

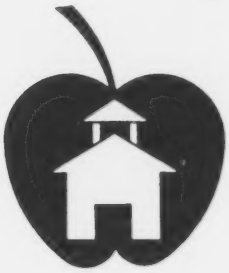
###

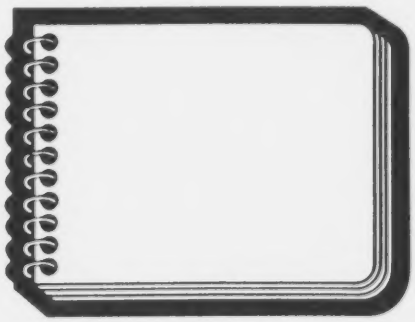
Approximately 15 seconds

Do you want to make a difference in your community? Do you want to see some of your good ideas put into action? The _____School District suggests that you volunteer to be on one of your local school, city or town committees. Get involved.

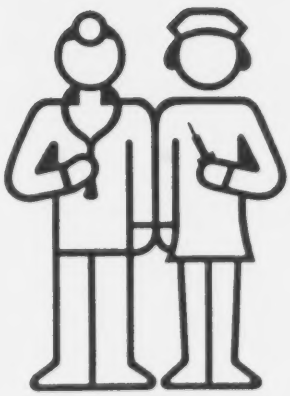
Families in Education
Educating Everyone Takes Everyone

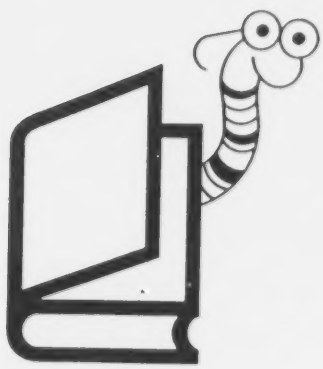
Second Quarter
Volunteerism and Community Service

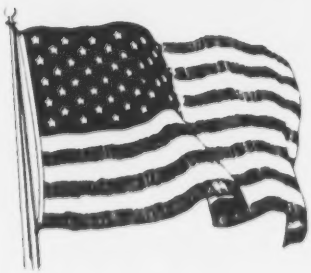




We
Support
Our
Support
Staff







IMPORTANT NOTICE

coming events

Families in Education

Table of Contents

Third Quarter

Parents as Learners

Setting the Stage
This month we focus on ways in which parents . . . of all ages and with children of all ages can learn. "Setting the stage" highlights the changing environment in which we live.

The Responsibility of Business in Education
Jim Morgan, executive director of communication of the Wisconsin Association of Manufacturers and Commerce, provides a strong rationale for business involvement in education at a variety of levels. He highlights important links, skills and proposals to improve education for economic development.

Messages to Parents Must Be Sent, Received, and Understood
Communicating well requires all three actions above. Too often, educators are too pressed for time to think about our messages, and then wonder why our attempts are not making visible differences. We are challenged by this article to take time to analyze our communication efforts.

Immunization Update
While much publicity was given to the need for a second dose of measles vaccine, parents may need to be reminded during the spring to ensure ease in updating records in the fall.

Organizing Parent Workshops
Perceptions of parents attending workshops vary from sup portive to antagonistic. Ensuring that a variety of factors have been considered in planning the workshop will benefit everyone involved.

Evaluate Your Involvement
This checklist might be distributed at an open house or orientation session as parents ask how they might be more involved. Staff needs to be aware of this list, too!

A Good Foundation for Learning
Specific tips for parents in enhancing children's readiness to learn: the ideas expressed will help parents learn, too!

Educating Everyone WILL Take Everyone
Henry Hendrickson, State G.E.D. administrator, shares experiences in intergenerational learning, family literacy, and the successes of the General Educational Development (G.E.D.) tests in Wisconsin.

Help Children Learn Study Skills
The study skills helping children learn will help adults as well.

Using Books to Learn about and Communicate with Your Child

Gloria A. Waity, consultant, An Ideal Place in Madison, explores how the topics of the books we choose as children (and adults) reflect our interests and concerns. Sharing our thoughts through discussion of books is often a way to improve problem solving and critical thinking skills.

There's Nothing To Do!!

Time and money are finite resources. How families choose to spend these resources reveals much about values, priorities and aspirations. We can learn much from and about our children and ourselves by using "free time" wisely.

Help Children With . . . Mathematics
. . . Social Studies
. . . Science
. . . Arts

Tips for increasing understanding of these subjects by learning together assist parents and students.

Start Planning Your Future

Parents as well as students are increasingly concerned about career alternatives. A simple discussion and worksheet can be strong preparation for career exploration.

Teens in Your Family? Read This!

Parenting teens is a major challenge in today' society. Some tips may lead to better understanding and communication . . . and less hassle.

Teen Parents: What Can We Do To Help?

The topic of teen pregnancy raises many concerns and much attention. It is important to consider not only the teens, but their children. Raejean Kanter, DPI consultant, School Age Parent Program, shares an important perspective on school age parents.

Resources

Included are publications which provide additional avenues of information for parents, staff, and community.

Quotations

These quotations may be used in newsletters, articles, and speeches, and on bulletin boards.

References to 1987-90

Use these convenient references to find related articles in the packets produced in 1987-88 (Year of the Family in Education), 1988-89 (Families in Education – Our Children . . . Wisconsin Cares), and 1989-90 (The Year of Community Partnership).

Media Materials

Use the sample press release as part of your public awareness cam[illegible]n. Clip art is included for use in school newslsetters, flyers, or other publications or for inclusion on items sent to parents and community members.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.

Setting the Stage

How do we do define "parents as learners"? Adults being retrained for their professions? Adults being trained as parents? Teen parents being trained as parents? Improving literacy among adults? Intergenerational learning? The answer is "yes"...and more.

Evolving research stresses the importance of family involvement in education of their children. Parents might be hesitant to be involved because they are not trained as educators, and might "mess up" their children's learning processes. Clearly, students perform better when they hold themselves in high self-esteem. Sometimes, parents need to improve their self-esteem before they can help their children. Educators can help minimize those parental fears of "messing up" by coaching, providing information, and by encouraging parental follow through on classroom activities.

In February 1990, four of the top five issues surfacing in a random sample of school principals conducted by John Wherry address concerns related to family involvement in education: funding, children-at-risk, changing structure of the family, parent involvement in education, helping parents parent.

Wherry, president of The Parent Institute, and publisher of WHAT'S WORKING in Parent Involvement, quotes additional research that indicates if 33 percent of the parents in the building are "involved" there will be a measurable difference in student skills.

So count your volunteers, enlist the PTAs or PTO's support, and keep in mind the world in which today's families function:

- Factors affecting the family will continue to show a dramatic change from the "Norman Rockwell" family (male breadwinner, homemaker wife, typically two children) of the past. By 2000, fewer than 4 percent of families will fit the "Norman Rockwell" mold.
- There will be more multi-families, i.e., children living with adults who are not related.
- Legal redefinitions of "family" will have an impact on schools. For example, more and more schools will take care of children during after-school hours while the single parent is still at work.
- By 2000, 75 percent of three-year-olds will attend nurseries (day-care centers or nursery schools).
- Both partners in most family units (married and unmarried) will work; this figure could rise to 75 percent by 2000.
- The number of single-parent families is steadily growing in size and importance. The major reasons why white children are living with only one parent is divorce; for black and Hispanic children it is because the parent was never married. If current trends continue, by 2000: 11 percent of white children will be living with a divorced mother (10 percent in 1988); 17 percent of Hispanic children will be living with a never-married mother (10 percent in 1988); 42 percent of black children will be living with a never- married mother (29 percent in 1988).

The number of people below the poverty level is not improving; among woman-headed families (no husband present) the rates are rising, especially for children (from *75 Trends in Education, Educational Renaissance*, by Marvin Cetron and Margaret Gayle, St. Martin's Press, 1990.)

Another national perspective is offered by William J. Banach in the 1991 edition of *The Ten Top Educational Issues*, published by The Institute of Future Studies, Macomb Community College, 14500 Twelve Mile Road, Warren, MI 48093

"...Doctors don't like it when you tell them their business, lawyers get upset when you question their advice. In fact, most professionals—maybe all people—don't like others trampling on their turf." That's why parents and educators may be natural enemies. Consider this: A parent-teacher conference begins with the teacher saying "Stuart doesn't read too well." Mother and father believe their parenting skills are being questioned. Teacher is trampling on parental turf. They respond by saying: "If you'd just teach phonics every-

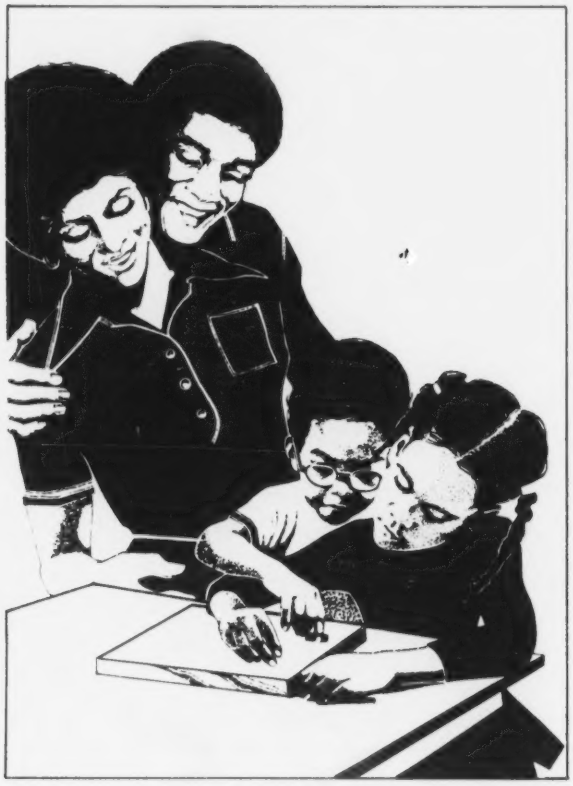
thing would be okay!" Now the parents are stepping on teacher turf—questioning the professional's ability. Educators keep saying they want parents and others "meaning fully" involved in schools, but no one has defined the dimension of such a goal. Perhaps that's why there's a forked tongue mental set about parental involvement.

"Come close," school people say. But they're thinking: "Not that close, for heaven's sake!!!" In one school district mothers who try to help out are called "Helicopter Moms" by the staff because "...they're always hovering around." If parental involvement in the educational process is one of the common denominators for student success (and most people believe it is!), then we must work to break down the barriers between educators and the people they serve.

"If learning is a family affair, then there must be an environment of openness, sharing and team play. Both sides need training. Both sides must identify the desired student outcomes and define what kinds of meaningful involvement will make them possible. What, for example, should our graduates be able to do? What, for example, is meaningful involvement to a dual-career couple? Is it the same for a single parent? When the outcomes are unclear and society's family tree is replaced by a hedge, teacher-parent relations can't be the same as they were for the Cleavers."

"Our colleges of education could help by giving teacher candidates the demographic context for schooling and information about the operant values of a changing constituency. Staff development specialists could provide training to help educators understand the dynamics of a learning partnership and define the dimensions of meaningful involvement. Once the common ground is identified it'll be harder to step on someone else's turf."

"Parents as Learners" is a reality in our changing world. While preparing students for "lifelong learning" has been an identified goal of many districts, parents are becoming an increasing audience for all of us.



The Responsibility of Business in Education

The Wisconsin Governor's Symposium on Skills Forecasting for the 21st century determined that in order to maintain and improve the employability skills of the Wisconsin work force, business, education and government must work together to plan for the future. This planning must include recognizing the future economic development needs of business and developing an education program and curriculum which provides basic levels for all students with the opportunity to master the following skills needed in the 21st century:

- application of science and technology
- creativity and the capacity for innovation
- lifelong learning skills
- adaptability
- planning, goal setting, and goal achievement
- self-management and interpersonal skills
- communication and language skills
- globalization (international education)
- application mathematics
- problem solving and analytical thinking

In order to achieve these things, it is imperative that business and education develop a relationship which works together now and into the future. Only from the development of the basic skills at a young age and continuing education to develop technical skills will the students of today be prepared for the work force of tomorrow. Only through a continuing relationship between business and education will we be able to prepare today's kindergarteners for new jobs and positions *which don't even exist today*.

Fundamentally, the employability of the workers must be linked to the available jobs. Under this premise, it is the business sector's responsibility to inform educators as to what they see these jobs to be. It is the educator's responsibility to see that today's students are prepared to handle those jobs which will be available in the future. If the future jobs lie in the fields of genetic engineering, biochemistry, computers, robotics, satellites,molecular design, and a host of very technical fields, it is obvious that anyone without a good basic educational foundation has little hop of progressing.

Why is this link between business and education so important? Consider the following:

- There will be 20 percent fewer high school graduates in 1990 than in 1980.
- The skills needed in the work force are growing increasingly complex and changing rapidly. It is estimated that today's kindergarteners, who will graduate from high school in the next century, will witness seven or eight job changes during their "productive" years.
- By 1990, 80 percent of the jobs will require some postsecondary education.
- Approximately 700,000 students a year are dropping out of the education system.
- And, finally, work force growth in the next twelve to fifteen years will be about 1 percent per year as contrasted to the 3 percent per year we have had for the last 20 years.

So the future success of business has become essentially an educational problem.

As the number of new jobs created continues to increase and the unemployment rate continues to decrease, businesses no longer have the luxury of choosing what might be considered the cream of the crop. Those individuals who may have previously been considered unqualified are now a necessity. As a result, the basic skills gap between what business needs and the qualifications of the entry level workers available to business, is widening.

So, what is it that businesses are looking for in a new employee?

First of all, there is a need for a sound basic education. The ability to read and comprehend; to write sentences with correct sentence form, spelling, punctuation, and other matters of mechanics; to be able to perceive errors and rewrite; to speak and explain ideas clearly; to answer and ask ques-

tions and follow verbal directions; to be able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide; and to be able to work with fractions and decimals.

Second, there is a need for the understanding of technical skills including measuring and comprehending spatial relationships and the use of metric measurements; and the ability to work accurately with computers and computerized programs.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the need for the employee with a positive attitude and a willingness to work. Included in this is the ability to:

- Learn, be flexible and respond to change quickly.
- Deal with complexity, learn and perform multiple tasks and analysis and deal with the wide variety of options.
- Identify problems, perceive alternatives, and select the best approach.
- Operate independently after a brief initial training.
- Work cooperatively with people of different personalities, race, sex, and be able to deal with different authority levels in organizational divisions.
- Be punctual and dependable as well as show pride and enthusiasm in performing well.

Wisconsin is fortunate to have one of the finest educational systems in the United States. It also has in place an *Education for Employment* program which refocuses the mission of public, elementary and secondary education by recognizing the key roles schools play in economic development. *Education for Employment* has outlined the following major areas of concern and developed proposals addressing each.

- Reemphasize the basics for all K-12 students and incorporate practical applications to the workplace. By linking learning to earning, the curriculum is made more relevant to the work world.
- Make use of the Wisconsin developmental K-12 guidance program, giving all students job seeking skills, the ability to make more realistic career choices, and ways to use labor market information.
- Seek to make what is commonly referred to as the "Work Ethic" part of the total school curriculum as students are expected to be dependable, accurate and responsible. As teachers, principals, administrators, and counselors reenforce workplace expectations, learning will become the students "job."
- Provide all students will the opportunity for a school monitor work experience. All students leaving high school should possess two credentials; a diploma and a resume.
- Bring the basic concepts of business operations and entrepreneurship, including labor, agriculture and the U.S. economic system into the curriculum.
- Establish partnerships with community businesses and all areas of the education enterprise including curriculum revision, teacher training, and student development programs.
- Establish a cost effective and up-to-date vocational education program in cooperation with business/industry and the VTAE system and based upon labor market and pupil needs.

The economic development of a city, state, or nation is often measured on how effectively it uses its resources. Wisconsin is well-known as "America's Dairyland" due to its agriculture excellence; it is known for being a strong manufacturing state; and it is known for its flourishing service sector. It also rates high in terms of quality of life and education. A strong partnership between business and education can only enhance our well established reputation. It will also provide substantial rewards to Wisconsin in the form of improved economic development.

Jim Morgan, Executive Director
Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce
Madison, WI (608/258-3400

Messages to Parents Must Be Sent, Received, and Understood

"Communication" is a word used frequently in today's society. Too often we think of communication as simply talking or writing, but communication has three important parts: a message must be sent, received, and under--stood.

Sending Messages

First, examine the messages we send. Do educators talk and write to parents in the same way they do to the children they teach? Adults do not want to be treated like children. To the question "How can teachers help parents the most?" one parent replied, "By regarding my questions as reasonable and intelligent and answering them as completely as possible."

Dorothy Rich, author of *Teachers and Parents: An Adult-to-Adult Approach*, (National Education Association 1987) has given some examples of how teachers can apply Maslow's five universal desires to working with parents.

- *Recognition*. Let parents know that they are significant educators of their children. Give them a greater sense of their importance in their children's lives.
- *Affection*. Let parents know that you understand and know personally how difficult it is to be a parent today and to juggle the tasks of family and job.
- *Power*. Let parents know that the school believes that every family has strengths, such as the parents' love for their children. These strengths can be mobilized to help the family, teachers, and children.
- *New Experiences*. Encourage parents to try new teaching activities at home and enjoy the real thrill that comes from teaching—seeing children learn! Share with families home teaching ideas that are nonthreatening and easy to do, such as using the laundry to teach reading classification skills to young children, and using newspaper ads to teach older youngsters how to find the best buys in foods.
- *Security*. Let parents know that they are needed and wanted. Try to avoid making them feel guilty for not having been involved before or for being unable to attend school events during the workday. Because of their own school experience, many parents start with basic insecurity about school. You can reduce this feeling by sharing as much information as possible about how the school works and about teachers' concerns for parent needs."

Rich also has identified four adult learning characteristics relevant to the parent-teacher relationship.

- *Self-Direction*. Adults tend to know what they need to learn. For example, instead of telling parents what they need to learn, teachers can ask what parents think they need to learn in order to work with their children and the school.
- *Experience*. Adults expect to use their experiences in addressing problems. Parents hope teachers will respect the family's own life experience. Failure by teachers to use this experience is equivalent to rejection of parents as persons. When inviting parents to a conference or a meeting, teachers should plan for active involvement, not passive learning. Encourage meetings in which parents talk with and help one another.
- *Problem Centeredness*. Adults learn best around life problems rather than 'subjects.' Adults want and need practical solutions. Adults are far more ready to tackle specific, rather than general, problems. For example parents want to know about their own child, not about children in general. Teachers should give parents facts about their child and expect parent problems-solving help. Is the child having trouble with homework? With friends? What can we do about it? Parents have a stake in solving these problems and need the opportunity to get involved.

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• *Self-Evaluation*. Adults tend to be more interested in feedback than in grades. Teachers can help parents evaluate how well they are doing at home by sharing information on how their children are doing in school.

Receiving Messages

Receiving messages has two parts: the physical part of receiving, simply getting the message to the parent, and the mental or emotional part.

Parents are busy people. Only a minority of children live in a family where a parent is at home all day long. Schools must recognize this as a fact and adapt their communication methods accordingly. Gone are the days when a note pinned to the shirt of the child is read first by the mother. It's more likely that the child goes first to a child care center or to a babysitter. Notes sent home with the child are easily lost on the bus, in a mud puddle, or even eaten by the family dog. Likewise, letters sent to the home can be lost before the parents see them, or in some cases, destroyed by the child before the parents see them. So what's the school to do?

Communication seems to fall into two categories: general information about school and information specific to the child. Schoolwide newsletters successfully relay general information. Parents like to know what is going on in the school and how those activities affect their child and their child's education. Grade level newsletters might be beneficial to parents since they are specific to their child.

Parents want generalized information to be short, easy to read, and to the point. Some parents respond best to information that comes from their child's teachers. Some parents like to receive information at places where people stand or sit with time on their hands, such as restaurants, supermarket checkouts, beauty shops, and laundromats. Other parents want to know about ways they can actively get involved in their children's school. Still others simply want their information sent through the mail. We cannot overlook any possible avenues of reaching parents with the message.

Specific information about the child is communicated best through a personal contact. At the beginning of the school year, ask parents the best way for you to reach them. Some parents can be easily reached at their place of employment while others cannot. Some parents can be reached by telephone at home at certain times while others don't have telephones. You may need to spend some evening time making parent contacts if that's the only time parents are available.

The emotional reception of a message is harder to analyze. It's important here to remember that adults will probably tune you out if you preach to them, downgrade their family or their family situation, or overlook cultural differences in families. For instance, the common usage of the term "broken home" is terribly offensive to parents who are trying hard to raise their children by themselves. When educators use phrases such as "broken home" or "alcoholic parent," the parents hear, "I don't respect you or your situation." Therefore, parents don't listen because they think the educators don't know what they're talking about. We must not stereotype children because they are from ascertain family or race. Each child should be accepted on his or her own merits.

Parents want the school's communication to them to be timely. They want teachers to notify them early when their child is having a problem. They don't like surprises.

Parents want to know how their child is doing in school and how they can be involved. Parents have said to teachers:

• Ask for my help. It serves to remind me that I am part of the educational partnership and keeps me from getting complacent. I want involvement in any form.
• Give me suggestions on what's going on in the classroom and with homework. Let me know *immediately* when my child is falling behind in school work. It's really difficult to catch up once he's behind in work assignments.
• I think the teacher's role is to help parents identify strengths and weaknesses of our children and to give parents ideas on ways to encourage growth.

Understanding The Message

A message can be sent and received by the parents, but if the parents don't understand it, no communication has taken place. As you

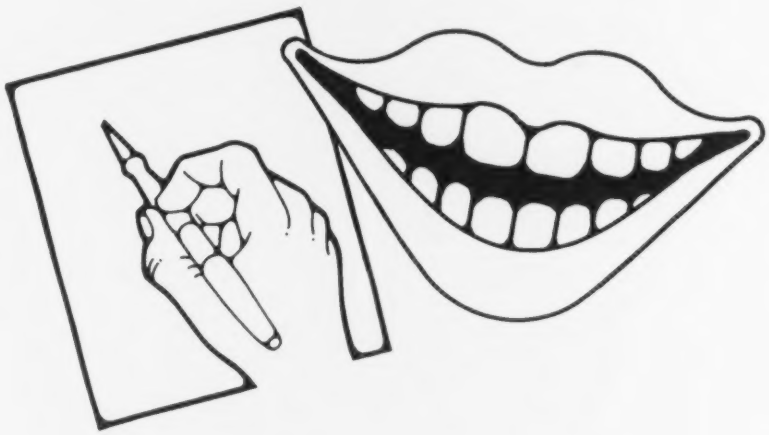
write or speak your message to parents, ask yourself these questions:

- Is my message clear and specific? Does it read, "Please contact me for a parent-teacher conference" or does it read, "Please contact me this week so we can meet to discuss Cory's school work. I'll be glad to meet with you when you are free."

Be very specific when giving suggestions to parents to help their children learn. Think about what you are saying to parents. When you say, "Cory is failing penmanship," are you asking for the parents' help? If so, give them suggestions on how to help Cory develop better coordination skills. Don't assume the parents know how to help.

- Is the message written or spoken in terms the parent can understand? Sometimes professionals get caught up in their own jargon that parents might not understand. For example, "Susan scored in the 50th percentile on the California Achievement Test" means absolutely nothing to most parents. Neither does the statement, "Susan is exhibiting anti-social behaviors on the playground."

Barbara Hug, Juneau County Extension Service, Mauston, WI



Immunization update

Recent outbreaks of measles have led to a revision of the school immunization rule (HSS144) requiring a second dose of MMR vaccine. Beginning with the 1990-91 school year, students entering kindergarten, 6th, and 12th grades will be required to have had two doses of MMR.

Check with your doctor if you have any questions about the following required immunizations:

- 2 months—first DPT and first polio
- 4 months—second DPT and second polio
- 6 months—third DPT
- 15 months—first HIB, first MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- 18 months—fourth DPI, third polio
- 4-6 years (or before school)—fifth DPT, fourth polio, second MMR

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Organizing Parent Workshops

Workshop Format

- Consider the interests and needs of the audience.
- Determine the information base before launching into a presentation. How much do most parents already know?
- Determine what equipment, materials, handouts, and questionnaires will be needed. Remember that visuals can break up the monotony of a session.
- Map out the agenda, including registration, presentations, breaks, meals, small group discussions, sharing of comments, summary, and evaluation.
- Choose a time and length that is convenient for the target group, remembering that many parents work during the day and that parents may become restless after a couple of hours.

Workshop Location

- The location of the workshop should be accessible if it is to be successful. The location should be near public transportation and provide access for the disabled.
- The facility should be large enough to accommodate all planned activities, especially if the participants will divide into groups.
- Find out if the facility has or can provide all necessary equipment. Often items such as chalkboards, microphones, and flip charts can be provided, thus eliminating the need to transport such items.

Workshop Speakers

Finding good resource people is very important to the success of a workshop. Decide how these speakers fit into the workshop. Do they have information that cannot be gained from other sources? What is their history with the subject area of the workshop? Are they sensitive to the issues? Have they given successful presentations to similar groups?

- Identify the issues that need to be emphasized or conveyed.
- Tell the speaker what messages to be clear about.
- Research community groups, state and national organizations, and professional groups to find which are currently involved in similar activities.
- Contact local teachers, counselors, and school administrators to find out what can be learned from their personal experience.
- Ask your local speakers' bureau, library, and professional associations for their lists of public speakers.

Publicizing the Workshop

Publicity can make or break the workshop. If people do not know about the workshop, they cannot participate.

- Create a need. If parents feel it is necessary or will be helpful to participate, attendance will likely be higher. Make each person feel his or her attendance is important.
- Encourage word of mouth communication. Suggest that everyone bring a friend.
- Design flyers, posters, and news releases and decide how and where to distribute the materials.
- Use the local media. Send an announcement of the workshop to local radio and television stations for airing as a public service announcement. Send a news release to the local newspaper. Include the date, place, time, charge (if there is one), purpose of the workshop, and the name and telephone number of a contact person.
- Take advantage of former successes. Highlight those items that made the last workshop or seminar a success.
- Use the expertise of other community groups to publicize the workshop.
- For individual contact, send invitations/notices at least three weeks prior

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to the workshop. Follow up one week before the event.

Conducting the Workshop

- Set up registration tables where participants can sign in upon arrival. This not only helps determine attendance but also provides an excellent record of names and addresses for follow-up.
- Have name tags available for each participant.
- Have workshop packets available for participants, if appropriate. This saves time and allows participants an opportunity to become familiar with the planned activity.
- Allow time for participants to fill out a questionnaire before the workshop begins to find out what they already know; have them complete another one six or eight weeks after the workshop, to gain feedback on the effectiveness of the activity. Feedback is important in planning further workshops.

Source: National Urban League, Inc., What Students Need to Know, Education Initiative, New York, N.Y. 1989.
Contact: Stephanie G. Robinson, Ph.D., Director of Education. (212) 310-9000.

Evaluate Your Involvement

Are you involved in the education of your children? Read the items listed below and check those that apply to you. If you can check at least 25 of these items, you are probably an involved parent; 24-20, moderately involved; 19 or less, not involved enough.

- ☐ I let my children know daily that I love and respect them.
- ☐ I read to my children.
- ☐ I talk to my children's teachers.
- ☐ I attend parent-teacher conferences.
- ☐ I attend parent-teacher organization meetings.
- ☐ I attend school board meetings.
- ☐ I visit my children's classrooms.
- ☐ I check my children's homework.
- ☐ I know what my children are studying.
- ☐ I attend school activities in which my children are involved.
- ☐ I take my children to the library or museum.
- ☐ I give my children a quiet place to study and uninterrupted study time each day.
- ☐ I encourage the interests and hobbies of my children.
- ☐ I allow my children to teach me things they learn.
- ☐ I arrange for children to display or demonstrate things they have learned.
- ☐ I encourage them to write (notes, letters, diary, forms).
- ☐ I give my children a chance to read to family members.
- ☐ I discuss with my children what we watch on television.
- ☐ I talk about why some movies are better than others.
- ☐ I make sure my children are offered well-balanced meals.
- ☐ I discuss house rules with my children.
- ☐ I teach basic safety rules to my children.
- ☐ I praise good efforts of my children.
- ☐ I hug my children.
- ☐ I help my children accept responsibility in the home and teach why this is important.
- ☐ I meet my children's friends.
- ☐ I am not afraid to discipline my children when it is necessary, but I temper it with love.
- ☐ I check to see if parents are home when my children are invited to parties.
- ☐ I set definite, reasonable curfews.
- ☐ I encourage my children to help prepare meals, read recipes, and measure ingredients.
- ☐ I give my children freedom to make decisions which are age-appropriate.
- ☐ I teach my children to respect and accept others, no matter what their culture or race.

A Good Foundation for Learning

Every child can succeed in school, even if he or she is not a straight-A student. Success in school is achieved through reaching learning goals as well as communicating and cooperating with other children and adults.

Foundation for Children's Success Is the Home

Achievement in school cannot be imposed on children by teachers. It begins in the child-parent relationship with the skills and attitudes taught to the child. Parents are children's first and most important teachers and the parent role model is critical in the learning process. Important skills and attitudes for success in school must be taught by parents before a child enters school.

Developing Attitudes

- *Security.* A child's greatest asset in school and in life is a sense of self-worth. Parents of successful students provide a constant, secure atmosphere of encouragement and support in which youngsters may test and apply their growing knowledge. Home is a haven of acceptance and love as well as a place of challenge and demand. Give children unconditional love. This develops their self-esteem and gives them a role model for their own behavior as future parents.
- *Limitations.* As children develop, they are constantly testing the limits—physical, social, and intellectual—of where their mastery ends and the mastery of other people or forces must be acknowledged. Parents of successful students teach them to respect limits, yet permit them to risk exploring those limits while seeking to expand their world. The goal of discipline is to have children internalize limits and boundaries set by parents. Discipline is an element in showing love for children.
- *Routine.* Children thrive on orderliness, particularly when it comes to time. Parents of successful youngsters keep fairly regular schedules and inform their children of the elements of the schedules. When plans are changed, children are updated so that they hold clear expectations and experience the satisfaction of having their expectations fulfilled. As children get older, parents should include them in planning so that they can feel responsible for input.

Fostering Basic Skills

- Allow for choices. Allowing children to make choices builds their sense of independence and self-esteem. Let your child choose between an apple or cereal as a snack or between one method or another of putting away toys.
- Read aloud to your children and, as they grow older, encourage them to read aloud to you. The single most important thing parents can do to help their children become good readers is to read aloud every day.
- Take children on outings to the park, museum, zoo, entertainment center, historical sites, civic events, place of employment, libraries, bookstores, nature trails, and shopping mall. A variety of activities stimulates the mind and creates a storehouse of good memories.
- Teach children how to use books, paper, ruler, scissors, crayons, tape, glue, and drawing tools.
- Encourage memorization, beginning with numbers, colors, and the alphabet. Build upon these to create more challenging recall games.
- Create a safe environment. Childproof the house by keeping household poisons and other hazards out of reach. Protect children from "toxic" TV shows also.
- Prepare children for new events. Information reduces fear of the unknown. If your child is going to the dentist or hospital, for example, talk to your child about what to expect. When you go away, tell children where you are going and when you plan to return.

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- Encourage pretending and make-believe games and stories so that children can flex their imagination and creative skills. Answer questions that children ask to encourage their curiosity.

- As children develop, introduce them to more advanced resources for learning—the dictionary, atlas, globe, history book, encyclopedia, and thesaurus.

Teen Parents: What Can We Do To Help

During the last few months much attention has been drawn to meeting the needs of teen parents. One of the underlying reasons for this attention is the concern for the development of the children born to teen parents. National studies have shown that children born to teen parents are more at risk for school failure, school behavioral problems, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy. If we are to break these cycles, we must take a look at how schools are helping our teen parents deal with their needs. All parents need a supportive community in which to raise their children. Teen parents are no exception. In fact, their need for a supportive community may even be greater.

Teen parents in Wisconsin are guaranteed by law that they will receive an equal education. No school district may discriminate against a student because of parental status. This, however, is the minimum. In order for teen parents to achieve their full potential, schools must address the special needs that teen parents have. Some of these needs are:

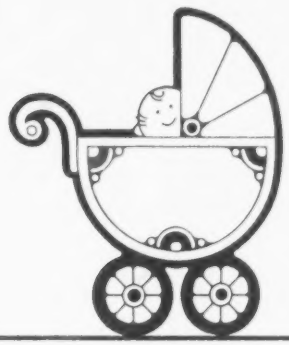
- The need to complete their high school education. This need includes help in designing a schedule that accommodates the additional responsibility of being a teen parent.
- The need to receive parenting education that is specifically designed for teen parents. Classes designed in child growth and development for nonpregnant or parenting teens do not necessarily meet the needs of young people actively engaged in parenting a child. The difference is similar to the difference between the classroom portion and the behind-the-wheel segment of driver's education. Teen parents need an opportunity to discuss the challenges unique to being a teen parent.
- The need for adequate child care. One of the greatest dilemmas that faces a teen parent is: How do I attend school on a regular basis and still assure that my baby is receiving the best care possible? Child care for teen parents is not very accessible. Where it is available, the cost is often prohibitive.
- The need for vocational education. Job skills are very necessary for teen parents whether or not they decide to continue their education beyond high school. Most teen parents will need jobs that will provide wages to support not only themselves but also their children. A job that pays minimum wage cannot do that. Teen parents need the education to make themselves self-sufficient.
- The need for life skills education. This education includes employment information, financial management, household management, self-sufficiency, consumer education, and access to community resources.

Although this list is not exhaustive of the needs of teen parents, the ones that are mentioned are ones that are in the range of possibilities for schools to assist them in satisfying. Many districts in Wisconsin have designed programs that are meeting some or all of these needs. The key to designing a successful program is a careful examination of the needs of the teen parents in the district and the resources available to the school. Schools should remember that the larger community can offer assistance in many of the areas previously mentioned. Community- based organizations often have programs to support the education occurring in the schools. This is particularly true in the areas of child care and parenting education. Schools should develop a policy and program that address the needs of teen parents. Included in this policy should be a clear definition of who has the primary responsibility for insuring the rights and the needs of teen parents are met. In some schools, teen parent advocates have been hired to aid the teen parents. The advocate works as the "eyes" of the school, checking on the attendance and grades of the students, and also as the "voice" of the teen parents, helping them in situations that may warrant additional assistance. The advocate also helps the teen parent receive assistance from agencies

outside the school offering programs that would benefit the teen parent.

Some people claim that giving teen parents special "benefits" will only encourage more young people to become teen parents. The special services that are offered to teen parents are not rewards but rather survival skills if the cycle of teen pregnancy is to be broken. The real children at risk in this situation are the babies born to teen parents if no assistance is given to them. Teen parents love and care for the children born to them. They, however, are children themselves. In order for all the children involved to grow in a healthy environment, the adults in their lives, parents, school personnel, and community members must all do their part.

For more information on programs for teen parents, contact Raejean Kanter, Consultant, School Age Parent Programs, (608) 267-3725 or (608) 266-9368.



Educating Everyone WILL Take Everyone

Recognizing that parents are their children's first and most important teachers, quality family literacy programs seek first to meet the needs of adults who are educationally dependent and whose attitudes and abilities were affected by bruising experiences in school.

Recent research substantiates earlier studies in which respondents say they dropped out of school because they felt isolated, alienated, and deprived. Feelings of failure and disappointment keep these adults from remembering school as a pleasant place or from thinking of education as a life value. Until those wounds are healed and attitudes are changed, undereducated parents usually do not pass on positive educational values to their children. Neither, in many cases, do they provide adequate economic, emotional, or social surroundings.

For some, though, the desire for adequate educational opportunities for their children is stymied by the parent's lack of tools—the basic skills that will nourish intellectual development. In fact, a recent study led researchers to conclude that the intergenerational effect of the parent's education on the child calls for changes in the nation's public education system. Unless we place equal priority on education and academic remediation for the parent, they say, "it is unlikely that we will be able to make a difference for the child." Making that difference is what family literacy programs are all about. Bringing parents and their preschool children together in an educational experience helps to eliminate the fragmentation of some and isolation of others. Preventative and corrective efforts give attention to the intergenerational factors involved with "at risk" children. At the same time that those adults are acquiring more advanced skills, children are close by, learning and doing in a quality preschool program.

Quality family literacy programs do not stop there, however. One of the major strengths of an intergenerational program is that it creates an atmosphere that supports learning both ways. That atmosphere is transportable; it shows up in the homes of students involved in these programs. This is possible because both generations of learners also become teachers, participating in reciprocal and mutually beneficial components of the program. Once such component of family literacy is a time for parents and their young children to come together, with parents following the lead of their children in play sessions. It becomes a common occurrence to hear a child explaining to her mother, "This is the way you do this." A parent's desire to learn is both heightened and fulfilled as he reads to his son during these sessions, and his self-esteem is raised as well when he hears his son say, "You're a great reader, Daddy."

Closer bonds are created between the parents and their children, as stories told by parents in family literacy programs reveal. Many parents disclose that they didn't know how important their role as "first teacher" is. When parents in family literacy programs come together for group discussions, they reinforce each other by offering practical ideas, support for problems, and friendly advice about how to approach that primary role. This is also a time for developing friendships. One mother said, "I found the sisters I never had, and they gave me the courage to keep trying." Family literacy programs develop partnerships for learning and for success on many levels: parent and child, student and student, friend and friend. By tying two generations together in a unique educational opportunity, the cycle of low family literacy can be addressed and changed. Education is still the most important variable for escape from poverty and welfare, and education still sets the course for hopes and dreams for individuals and families.

For parents who did not complete high school, the tests of General Educational

Development (GED tests) with additional requirements in citizenship, health, career awareness, and employability skills provide an opportunity to earn Wisconsin's High School Equivalency Diploma. The GED program, sponsored by the American Council on Education and administered in Wisconsin by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), enables individuals to demonstrate that they have acquired a level of learning comparable to that of high school graduates. Recognized nationwide by employers and institutions of higher learning, the HSED/ GED program has increased employment, education, and earning opportunities for millions of adults since 1942.

Many GED teachers and administrators throughout Wisconsin have had the experience of watching with great pride as a mother, a father, and grandparents walked across the state together at GED graduation ceremonies to receive their High School Equivalency/GED Diplomas. Ceremonies where multiple generations from the same family are awarded their credentials are strong testimony to the effects of "second chance" education on the entire family. One family member enrolls in an HSED/GED program and soon other family members give education a second chance. The family's legacy of High School Dropout is replaced by a tradition of success.

The strong influence of the family on education is at the heart of the newly emerging field of family literacy. The goal of family literacy is to attack the cycle of illiteracy that persists in many families. Family literacy programs bring parents and children together as a learning team. These rapidly expanding programs in Wisconsin are characterized by literacy and parenting education for adults, pre-reading and other literacy activities for children, and a time for parents to use their newly acquired skills with their children.

Henry Hendrickson, DPI,
Wisconsin High School Equivalency/GED Program
608/267-9448

Help Children With Homework and Learn Study Skills

Homework helps children learn. It helps them remember what was taught in class. It allows children to study a topic in depth. Students who excel in academics cite parental encouragement and help as factors that influence their success. Here are some ways that parents can help their children with homework.

Environment

- Provide a table or desk and good lighting in the study area.
- Keep noise and distractions in the house to a minimum when children are studying.
- Supply paper, pencils, markers, pens, erasers, dictionary, thesaurus (particularly for children in grades 7 - 12).
- Children study with fewer distractions when music and TV are off.

Attitudes

- Starting when children are young, set aside a "quiet time" each afternoon or evening for reading, letter writing, and games. Creating a regular pattern will help your children get into the homework habit.
- It is natural for students to complain about homework; but if your children continually seem bored by busy-work assignments or homework that seems above their ability level, talk to the teacher about your concerns.
- Follow up on homework assignments by asking to see your children's homework after it has been returned by the teacher.
- Help children accept the fact that their efforts do make a difference and that the hours they spend studying determine success or failure. The next time they bring home test results, written comments, or report cards, discuss the reasons why they did well or poorly. Help them relate their efforts to the result.
- Try to be home and available during homework time so children know you value homework as another part of their education.
- Reward children for improvement. Use praise. Sometimes give them a special treat, trip, family activity, or privilege for special achievement.
- Sign and date your young children's homework, even if the teacher does not request it. Let the teacher know that you are interested.

Assignments

- Check to see that your children understand assignments. If there is a problem, work through a few examples with them.
- Ask to see your children's homework after it is done. Praise them for good efforts and point out errors to be corrected. Offer explanations to help with corrections if you know the material.
- Contact the teacher if you don't understand the assignment or if your child has a special problem. Do not hesitate to call the teacher!
- Do not do the children's homework for them. Encourage them to do the work.
- Establish a routine time to do homework. Some children study best before school, some as soon as they get home, some right after dinner. These schedules should be flexible enough to allow trade-offs and shifts when necessary.
- If you think your children are getting too much or too little homework, discuss your concerns with the teacher.

Study Skills

Some activities that parents do with their children lay the groundwork for learning important study skills. Here are some things parents can do with school age children.

- Research a topic which interests your children. With your children watching and

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helping, show them how to find and use maps, charts, the card catalog, encyclopedias, diagrams, almanacs, cookbooks, automobile and appliance manuals, or glossaries and indexes.

- Create a graph or chart and tell children what can be learned from it.
- Help them organize a chart or notebook in which they can write assignments, due dates, grades received, and a place where a parent can check assignments.
- Demonstrate notetaking. One effective method is to list important ideas on the right hand side of the page; then, in a left hand column, write down key words. By covering the right hand column and looking at the key words, the students can easily and quickly review for tests or presentations. Point out that continual review—looking over the key words every night—will prepare a student for both quizzes and for long term retention and synthesis of ideas.
- Help children concentrate by removing distractions while they are studying, such as TV, gadgets, and magazines. Encourage children to get a drink, sharpen pencils, find paper and eraser, and ask questions before they sit down to study. Help children extend their attention span. If children need practice in concentration, set an alarm clock to ring in 15-30-45 minute intervals until they can concentrate for longer periods of time.
- Review with your children. The key to learning is practice and review. The repeated process of trial and error is necessary. Listen to your children recite multiplication tables, spell words, practice new vocabulary, define difficult science words, or practice Spanish vocabulary.

Using Books To Learn About and Communicate with Your Child

Whether you are reading to a preschooler, your elementary child is reading to you, or your older children are reading on their own, books can be vehicles for you to learn about your child. The topics of the books chosen by the child usually reflect their interests and sometimes their concerns. When reading a book with your child you may be able to engage in a discussion on a topic which might be difficult to open without some reason.

Elementary School Age

If you have a child who is apprehensive about going to the dentist or doctor, there are factual books with pictures which tell about the things a doctor uses, but there are also stories such as *The Berenstain Bears Go To The Doctor* by Stan and Jan Berenstain. Dr. Grizzly examines the cubs, even giving them shots! *Going To The Doctor* by Mr. Rogers of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" has photographs of many children visiting the doctor. The books can be read just as any storybook at any time so that the child is familiar with the topic. As the time approaches the child may want to have the book read over and over and ask many questions. Taking the book along to hold in the waiting room can provide a sense of security.

Middle-and High-School Age

When your older children talk about what they are reading, listen! You will learn about their interests, what makes them laugh, their heroes and heroines, and perhaps, about their fears. Read some of the authors they enjoy.

If reading and discussing books together is not something that has been done from babyhood on, it may take some trial and error sessions to make it work. Start by discussing a magazine or newspaper article. Ask what they thought about the issue and accept their opinion. You can agree or disagree with the article rather than the child. If for some reason there is a reluctance to discuss an issue and you sense your child's concern, it may be up to you to introduce the topic by "happening" to have a book lying in a frequented spot. Discussing such concerns as physical maturation, death, or divorce can be less intrusive if one does so through a book. Your school and public libraries have resources which list books by topic as well as those which suggest ways to communicate with teenagers.

Source: Gloria A. Waity, Consultant, An Idea Place, Madison, WI

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There's Nothing To Do!!

Parental decisions about how children use out-of-school time has powerful repercussions. Sociologist Elliott Medrich indicates that parental decisions about how children spend this most precious commodity reveal family values, priorities, and aspirations. Medrich points out that children's time, like money for most of us, is a finite resource: there is only a certain amount of time that is available to be spent. Recognizing that everyone wants children to have some unscheduled, free time when they can play and daydream, families can still make constructive use of some of the many hours of out-of-school time. Guidelines for parents, according to Joan M. Bergstrom in the March 1986 *Principal*, include:

- *Trust your instincts.* Parents have reliable intuitions about what will work and what is appropriate for their children. You know your children better than anyone else.
- *Listen to your child.* By focusing on a child's conversations, you can sometimes discover clues about his or her interests. Follow the leads detected in such conversations in formulating a plan of action. As you listen, ask yourself: What is my child trying to tell me? What is my child curious about? What might my child want to know more about?

Try using some questions that will elicit information from your child. Don't feel overwhelmed, depressed, or discouraged by a child's candor. What to ask a child: If you could do anything you want out of school, what would you do? When you are not in school, what are the things that your friends do that you wish you could do? What are you good at? What are you horrible at? What do you hate to do? What do you wish you were better at? What do you do in school that you would like to do out of school? What do you like to do around the house? What do you like to do with the family? What would you like to change in the things you now do out of school?

- *Observe your child.* Watch your child's interactions with a variety of materials and equipment. They often provide a truer picture of how the child thinks. Some materials and equipment actually excite children. Take the lead. Although directions must come for your child's own personality, you can provide a structure, reflecting your values, within which your child's individuality can flower. When you plan a role in planning, budgeting the precious supply of free time, you may actually be providing children with more freedom than if there were noting planned at all. It is within planned activities, and not by random choice, that children will meet new people, have new experiences, develop new talents, and glimpse new possibilities.

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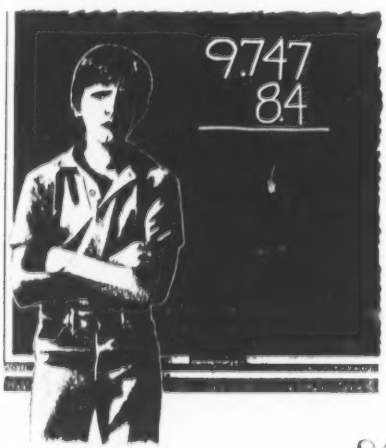
Help Children with Mathematics

At a very early age, children are able to use simple mathematical ideas. Their chances of success can be increased by providing activities to develop those ideas and by keeping a positive attitude toward mathematics. This sheet offers suggestions for various activities you can do with you with *young* children.

- Add and subtract small numbers. Check receipts for items purchased.
- Help children read price tags.
- Set the table for meals and count how many plates, napkins, glasses, knives, spoons, and forks are needed. As children grow, count the number of utensils and multiply by the number of place settings.
- Show children how to measure the ingredients in a recipe of something they enjoy eating. Later, have them reduce the recipe or double or triple it.
- Talk about the different shapes of items such as a circle, square, rectangle, and triangle.
- Note the difference between small and big, tall and short, close and far, right and left, plus and minus, high and low, and up and down.
- After reading a story, ask a child what happened first, second, and last.
- Show the number of cents in a nickel, dime, quarter, half dollar, and dollar. Later show how to make change from a dollar.
- Show how to estimate by guessing the length of a paper, table, room; then measure it with a ruler or yardstick.
- Select five food items from a newspaper ad. Add the cost. How much money would be left from $20?
- Teach your children the days of the week and the months of the year. Let them find important dates on a calendar such as family birthdays, religious holidays, Valentine's Day, Independence Day, and Halloween.
- Help children understand clock time and calendar time.
- Help them read thermometers and scales to measure temperature and weight.
- Talk about simple fractions. Using a catalog, figure the cost of items when they are on sale at 1/4 off.
- Watch a TV program with your children. Ask them to tell how many minutes are used for commercials compared to the number of minutes of program time. Make a bar graph that shows the length of time for each.



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Help Children with Social Studies

Here are some tips to help children's study of social studies.

- Visit museums, industries, newspapers, radio stations, and museums, and discuss what you see there.
- Check the course content of your school's social studies program and encourage your children to participate in research.
- Research your family history. Prepare a family tree. Interview older relatives and tape record their stories.
- Discuss daily news as part of the family dinner conversation.
- Encourage hobbies such as stamp collecting, flags, travel posters, dolls in native costumes, and foreign pictures.
- Take children on trips whenever possible and visit historic sites along the way.
- Encourage children to join school clubs, debate teams, foreign language clubs, and civic activities and projects.
- Attend cultural and ethnic programs and festivals with your children.
- Watch television programs that deal with history or current world events. Talk about how they relate to past events in history.
- Play board games that help children learn about industry, history, money, real estate, government, and geography.
- Encourage children to watch a daily news show.
- Discuss various world and national leaders' opinions.

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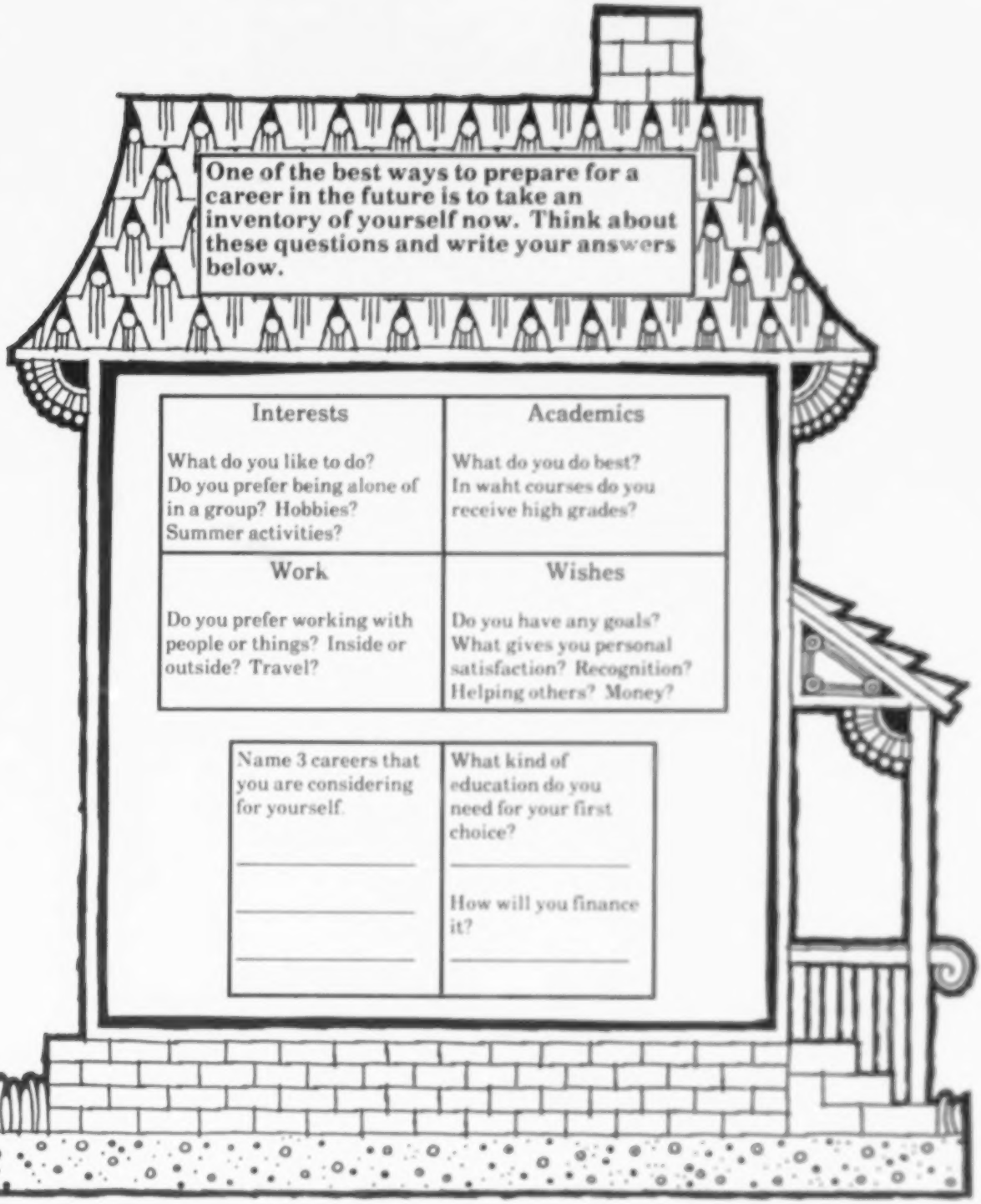
Start Planning Your Future



One of the best ways to prepare for a career in the future is to take an inventory of yourself now. Think about these questions and write your answers below.

Interests	Academics
What do you like to do? Do you prefer being alone of in a group? Hobbies? Summer activities?	What do you do best? In waht courses do you receive high grades?
Work	**Wishes**
Do you prefer working with people or things? Inside or outside? Travel?	Do you have any goals? What gives you personal satisfaction? Recognition? Helping others? Money?

Name 3 careers that you are considering for yourself.	What kind of education do you need for your first choice?
_____	_____
_____	How will you finance it?
_____	_____

Talk about these things with your parents, guardian, school counselor, or favorite teacher.

Teens in Your Family? Read This!

Today's teens feel more pressure and face greater dangers than teens of previous generations. They also need the support of their parents more than ever before. Parents should not always expect to understand teens, but they are expected to give caring support. Here are some helpful tips and considerations.

- A teen's behavior is sometimes childish, sometimes adult. Don't let it confuse you.
- Most teens don't like physical shows of affection, especially when their friends are around. Use words to let them know you care.
- Tell your teens about the facts of life early, even if they say, "I know that."
- Set reasonable curfews and stick to them.
- Teens will not always meet your expectations. They are not perfect; neither are parents.
- Teens need privacy; it's thinking and growing time.
- A teen's allowance should not depend on performance; it should be a dependable thing he or she uses to learn how to manage money.
- Teens express themselves by their clothes. Their choice of clothes may look awkward to you, but they may be giving your teen a sense of individuality and self-confidence.
- Teens need a room, nook, shelf, cabinet, or drawer they can call their own.
- Discipline teens only when reasonable expectations are not met. Be sure you explain clearly, in advance, what you want them to do.
- Encourage open discussion and try not to impose your opinions; show respect for your teenager.
- Remember that teens imitate your words and actions.
- All teens say, "Everyone's doing it." Set guidelines that fit into your family's value system.
- Give your teens opportunities to make decisions; allow them a voice in making rules, selecting classes, and learning activities.
- Avoid power struggles; remember that too much control causes rebellion.
- Maintain a sense of humor.
- Don't try too hard to communicate. Listen and be open minded.
- Talk calmly instead of yelling or preaching.
- If you are angry about something else, cool down before talking to your teen.
- Teens need to see parents admit their mistakes and apologize for certain actions.
- Use neutral situations like a TV show or news article to bring up and discuss topics such as sex or alcohol and other drug use.
- Daily conversation about school between parents and children is one of the things strongly associated with students' high grades.
- Give teens opportunities to interact with peers to help them aquire a sense of belonging. Teens need to feel part of a larger group.
- To help teens learn responsibility, give guidance, set clear limits for behavior, and provide enough structure to insure that the efforts of teens are met with success rather than failure.
- Give teens opportunities to have others depend on them; teens learn accountability when youngsters, the elderly, or tutored students need them.

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Encourage Children in the Arts

Arts education includes the study of visual art, theater, music, and dance. Arts education trains students to express their imagination, to be interested in the creations of others, to be expressive and responsive, and to pursue quality. It challenges and extends human experiences and adds to the quality of life for everyone. Mastery of the arts is not necessary for creativity and growth. For some children, expressing ideas and feelings is difficult; and teachers can use art, music, and movement activities to help children express themselves. Creative, expressive activities have no right or wrong answer, so children can be free from the fear of failure.

Many times an idea can be expressed better through an artistic or movement-oriented presentation than a written or verbal explanation. A poem, song, drawing, or dance may be a fitting medium for illustration of an idea. If children cannot perform or create new works of art, they should be taught enough about the arts to be able to appreciate and enjoy the arts as observers. This sheet lists some tips to help parents encourage the arts for their children.

- Encourage and praise children so they gain self-confidence.
- Provide a variety of materials for children's art projects and an appropriate place for them to work on art. Include materials for various mediums: paints, chalk, clay, paper, beads, metals, plastic, and others.
- Visit art museums where children can see a variety of art styles.
- Watch TV shows with children that focus on art topics.
- Provide opportunities for children to attend live music/dance performances.
- Visit ethnic fairs and cultural performances in the area.
- Encourage children to display artwork and perform music/dance/drama for groups, in and out of school. Display and share children's art work in the home.
- Help children understand that developing skills in the arts is a slow and demanding process, and that patience and persistence are important traits for success.
- Visit teachers to find out what cultural arts are introduced, and ask how you can enhance your children's learning.
- Accept and praise children's creations, realizing that even undeveloped scribbles and poorly proportioned drawings represent a necessary and important stage in children's development.
- If your children are interested, enroll them in local arts, crafts, music, dance, and theatre classes.
- Regularly attend your children's concerts and recitals.
- Help children understand and accept the responsibility of being a member of a musical/theatrical organization by ensuring attendance at rehearsals and concerts. Also, monitor practice time.
- Ask children what they feel about certain art expressions without passing judgment on their feelings so they feel free and safe in sharing themselves.
- Remember that the opportunities you give your children to learn about the arts are lifelong gifts.

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Help Children with Science

Children derive excitement from learning about science. There are basic skills used in science classes from kindergarten through college. When children know how to use these skills, they increase their chances of becoming better science students and problem solvers.

- Encourage students to raise questions about science material being studied.
- Take family trips to the zoo, science museum, botanical gardens, farm, laboratory, and aquarium. Visit the library to find books or computer programs about science.
- Watch science-related shows on TV.
- Read science-related articles in the newspaper with your children.
- Encourage hobbies in which children collect, sort, catalog, pool, observe, take notes, measure, compute, plant, and make graphs.
- Ask the science teacher often about your children's progress in science class, and ask to see your children's completed homework.
- Do not rush children when they are exploring, testing ideas, building things, calibrating instruments, constructing physical and mathematical models, and asking questions.
- Encourage working cooperatively with others in groups since scientists work mostly in groups and less often as isolated investigators.
- Encourage communication skills since scientists need to have clear expression when explaining new ideas, findings, and evidence.

The following basic skills are used in science classes:

1. Observing: Using the five senses to gather information through personal experience.
2. Communicating: Reporting observations orally, in written form, or through graphs, charts, models, records, descriptions, and calendars.
3. Measuring: Developing a description of properties through length, area, volume, weight, mass, or temperature.
4. Classifying: Recognizing patterns and collecting or sorting groups of objects based on common properties.
5. Making models: Constructing and using physical and mental representations of objects and ideas to clarify explanations or to show relationships between things or events.

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Parents as Learners

References to 1987-90

This listing of articles is included for easy cross reference of materials related to this quarter's topic. References to 1987-88 – *The Year of the Family in Education* – are followed by references to 1988-89 – *The Families in Education Program: Our Children . . . Wisconsin Cares*, – and references to 1989-90 – *The Year of Community Partnerships*.

Following each item are letters denoting target audiences:

A = Administrators
C = Community, Families in Education, and parent involvement committees
K = K-12 Staff
P = Parents

References to 1987-88 (Gold Packet)

"Families Learning Together" November (A,C,K,P)

"Effective Thinking Skills Begin at Home," February (K,P)

"Improving Communication Within Families," March (P)

"Classroom Conferences: How to Talk to Your Child's Teachers," August (P)

References to 1988-89 (Green Packet)

"Literacy Is a Family Affair," Sept-Nov (P)

"Parents' Resources and Family Education: A Key to Learning in a Community," Sept-Nov (P)

"Learning About Parenting," Dec-Feb (P)

Reference to 1989-90 (Red Packet)

"Lifelong Learning Month," October (A,C,K,P)

"Dear Parent: Feel Comfortable with Computers," October (P)

"Resources for Parents Month," November (A,C,K,P)

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QUOTATIONS

Parents as Learners

Teaching kids without teaching the parents is like clapping with one hand. Elain Tantle Shimberg Ignorance is a poor tool in a battle of wits.

—Anon.

If ignornacei s bliss, why aren't more people happy?

—Anon.

Learning is a treasure which follows its owner everywhere

—Chinese Proverb

In the classroom there is more teaching than learning. Outside the classroom there is more learning than teaching.

—Anon.

A wise man will hear and continue learning.

—Proverbs 1:5

We learn to listen and we listen to learn.

—Anon.

No one knows what he can do until he tries.

—Publlius Syms

Reading maeth a full man, conference a ready man, and working an exact man.

—Frances Bacon

You read what you are and you are what you read.

—Edgar Dale

Knowledge begets knowledge. There is always a need to know more.

—Anon.

When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.

—Samuel Langhorne Clemens

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Resources

Communication Skills

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the Interview But Were Afraid to Ask

This booklet offers pointers on maintaining the proper demeanor and appearance for a job interview. It is available in classroom quantities in the United States. Requests must be made by professional educators on official stationery. The booklet is available from:

Western Temporary Services
Attn: Ms. Nancy L. Wendt
Vice President and National
Program Director
Clerical and Industrial Divisions
P.O. Box 9280
Walnut Creek, CA 94569

How To Get Started In Professional Speaking

Twenty-three rules of public speaking, including selecting a topic, organizing and presenting a speech, and marketing speaking skills, are discussed in this pamphlet. A maximum of three copies is available to individuals, schools, libraries, and industries in the United States and Canada. Please include a stamped and self-addressed envelope. Pamphlets are available from:

The International Platform Association
P.O. Box 250
Winnetka, IL 60093

Parental Involvement

School Is What We Make It! A Parent Involvement Kit

The National PTA developed this kit to assist educators involve parents in school activities. Single kits are available free from:

The National PTA
700 North Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2571

Your Home Is Your Child's First School
You Can Use Television To Stimulate Your Child's Reading Habits

Available also in French and Spanish, the two pamphlets listed above deal primarily with reading and related subjects and are directed toward parents. Single copies of each are available free upon request with a stamped, self-addressed #10 envelope. Bulk copies may be ordered for $5 per 100 copies. The pamphlets are available from:

International Reading Association
Brochures
800 Barksdale Road
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139

Issues in Family Education

Children and Television: What Parents Can Do

This flyer addresses a variety of issues relating to children and television, including time spent watching TV, violence on television, the portrayal of life on television, and advertising. It offers parents suggestions for handling television viewing problems. Single copies are available in the United States. Requests must include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Write to the National PTA (see address given above).

A Conversation With Burton L. White: Toward Competent Families

Childhood determinants of fully developed and well integrated personalities are briefly discussed. Family obstacles preventing the best education of young children are also presented.

A Conversation With John J. Conger on Adolescence

The developmental stage of adolescence is examined by a clinical psychologist, who discusses issues prevalent during that time of

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life. A total of 30 copies of the two booklets listed above, in any combination, is available world-wide from:

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health
Publication Division
Box 7998
Austin, TX 78713-7998

Let's Talk About It Series

These helpful booklets contain messages from Fred Rogers of "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" on many aspects of family life and human growth and development. Single copies are available free world-wide if the requests include a stamped self-addressed envelope; or the entire set of booklets may be ordered for $2, which covers shipping and handling charges. Titles are:

Talking With Your Families About Creativity
Talking With Your Families About Discipline
Talking With Your Families About Divorce
Talking With Your Families About Pets
When You Have A Child In Day Care
When Your Child Goes To School
When Your Child Goes To The Dentist
When Your Child Goes To The Hospital
When Your Family Moves

The booklets are available from:

Family Communications, Inc.
Attn: Marketing Department
4802 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Home Management Materials

Students may gain a better grasp of the complexities of home management by reading one or more of the following materials:

The Advantages of a Surelocked Home
A Car Disappears Every 30 Seconds
Don't Invite Burglars In
Enjoy Your Woodburning Stove... The Safe Way
Finding The Right Home For You
Guide To Renting An Apartment
Inventory Of The Contents Of Your Home
Legend On Fire
Life Insurance Buyers Guide
Safe Home Guide
What Is Auto Insurance
What Is Home Insurance
Winter Can Take Its Toll On Your Home

Up to 250 copies of these pamphlets are available free to schools, libraries, and industries in the United States from:

State Farm Insurance Companies
Public Relations Department–DH
One State Farm Plaza
Bloomington, IL 61710

SAMPLE INFORMATION RELEASE

(Adapt to your needs and retype on district letterhead.)

Local Contact: (name, title, telephone)

Parents as Learners

In today's rapidly changing world, we all learn every day. Helping children learn by showing them that adults need to continue learning is a valuable lesson all by itself. Sharing new information, dining-table book reviews, discussion of television programs or movies, all lead to better understanding of the world around us.

Current events challenge us all to understand more about the way people of other parts of the world live and work. Maps, globes, newspapers all provide ways to learn.

For more ideas about how everyday activities can be opportunities for learning, talk with librarians, county extension agents, teachers and others. Educating everyone WILL take every one!

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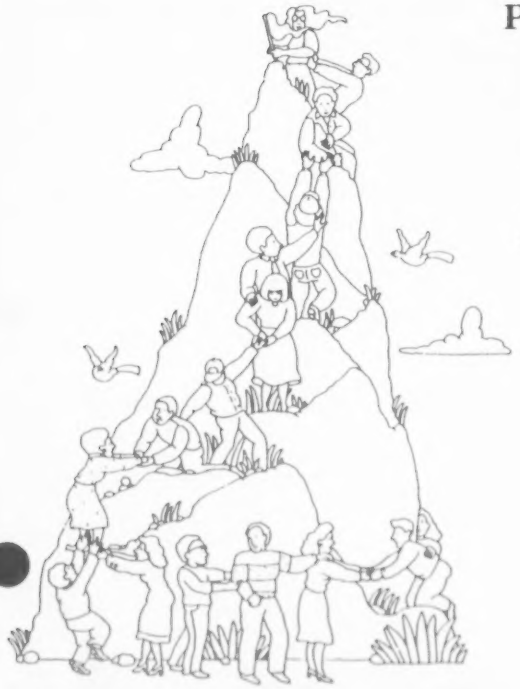
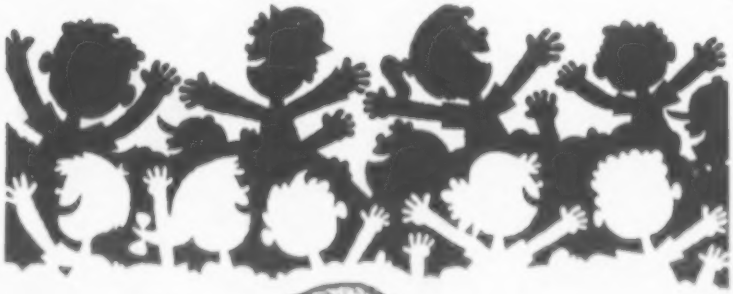
Families in Education
Educating Everyone Takes Everyone

Third Quarter

Parents as Learners





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Fourth Quarter

Families in Education

Children in Need

Boost Children's Self-Esteem
Adults are expected to help their children with many things they've never even heard before they were parents. One of these most important parent jobs is helping children boost their self-esteem.

Parents Can Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse
Strong communication is the key to prevention of the problem.

How Parents Can Help Young Children Learn Study Skills
Tips for parents looking for ways to enhance daily activities with children to complement and improve learning.

What Children Should Know Before They Attend Kindergarten
In Spanish and English, a list of skills that will increase children's capacity for success once in the classroom.

Get in Step With Breakfast . . . The First Step to Learning
Barbara J. Pratt and Barbara A. Hetzel of the DPI's Bureau for Food and Nutrition Services underscore the importance of nutrition to children's ability to learn.

Parent-Teacher Conferences
Planning for better parent-teacher conferences on the part of both the teacher and parent will improve communication and the potential for helping each child. Included are questions for parents and teachers to use when getting to know each other.

How Parents Help Teens Establish Values
Everyday consistency has the greatest impact.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse
While much has been written on this topic, helpful reminders and guidelines need to be made available every year as children mature. Because drug and alcohol abuse are part of most schools' curricula, communicating with parents on a regular basis assists in carrying the education home.

Characteristics of Teen Cults
The PTA defines the challenges presented to families and schools when teens become involved in cults.

Until There's A Home, There's "A Child's Place"
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has a program reaching out to educate homeless children (as do some of Wisconsin's schools). This article attempts to clarify the challenge presented to educators.

Working With Families Who Live in Poverty

Sean Mulhern, Bureau for Pupil Services discusses ways to identify and meet the needs of this growing population of students.

Associations Working With Populations of Families for Whom English is a Second Language

Hmong and Spanish populations are served through associations who can help educators looking for ways to improve educational opportunities.

Quotations

These quotations may be used in newsletters, articles, and speeches, and on bulletin boards.

References to 1987-90

Use these convenient references to find related articles in the packets produced in 1987-88 (Year of the Family in Education), 1988-89 (Families in Education—Our Children. . . Wisconsin Cares), and 1989-90 (The Year of Community Partnerships).

Resources

This is a list of publications describing services for children with special needs, as well as materials on school chess programs and teenagers' issues.

Media Materials

Use the public service announcement and the press release as part of your public awareness campaign. Clip art is included for use in school newsletters, flyers, other publications, or for inclusion on items sent to parents and community members.

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Boost Children's Self-Esteem

Adults are expected to help their children learn many things they've never even heard before they were parents. One of these important parent jobs is helping children boost their self-esteem.

What Is Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem is how people feel about themselves: how much they like who they are. Self-esteem slates people for success or failure and influences how they live their lives. Children with high self-esteem enjoy a quiet sense of self-respect, self-worth, and confidence. They know they have value and do not feel they need to impress others. They feel adequate, positive, worthwhile, loved, and in control.

For instance, it would be easy for a parent to say, "Everything is fine. Of course we love our children and think they are worthwhile." Unfortunately, there is a big difference between being loved and feeling loved. Many parents love their children; but somehow some children fail to get the message despite being told, perhaps over and over, that they are loved.

It may help to know that what adults say to children has less of an influence on their feelings about themselves than the way adults *treat* children. Since children value themselves to the degree that they are valued, the way adults treat children actually builds (or fails to build) self-confidence and self-worth.

Children use the words, body language, judgments, and attitudes of those around them to put together pictures of themselves. Young children think that adults are all-knowing and all-powerful, so the way adults treat them is the way children think they deserve to be treated.

Signals of Low Self-Esteem

Some children use defenses or cover-ups to hide feelings of inadequacy. The following are a few common signals that a child may suffer from low self-esteem:

- **Habitual tattling.** Children may "tell on" other children to make themselves look better.
- **Bullying.** Children may try to get to the top through force.
- **Chattering.** Children may talk almost incessantly to get attention.
- **Bossing.** Children may try to dominate others.
- **Fighting.** Children may pick fights and may even get hurt to be noticed.
- **Overeating.** Children overeat as a compensation for approval they lack.
- **Becoming a model child.** Children may assume the role of the perfect child—kind, polite, studious, quiet, thoughtful, neat—to be assured of a place in their parents' affections. These children keep normal feelings of anger, frustration, anxiety, and jealousy hidden out of fear that parents will stop loving them if these "bad" feelings are shown. These children are successful at covering up their real selves and will not develop self-confidence.
- **Submission and withdrawal.** Children who are more passive by nature and unable to work out defenses may just give up or withdraw when they cannot win parental approval. These children simply stop trying to win approval and may turn to daydreaming in their own safe world.

Parents Can Help Build High Self-Esteem

How can parents help children develop high self-esteem? The answer lies not just in spending lots of time with youngsters, buying them material gifts, or simply bestowing hugs and kisses. Here are the necessary ingredients to help boost children's self-esteem.

- **Nurturing love.** This love is tender and caring. We value children just because they exist. They are dear even if they don't always do the right things, don't meet expectations, or don't perform the way parents want. Nurtur-

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- **Direct Involvement.** Children need some time when a parent's attention is focused only on them. This time can involve a shared activity or short talk, but it requires the parent's undivided attention. Distractions and distancing make children feel that parents don't care. Youngsters most need focused attention when under stress: during a death or illness in the family, arrival of a new baby, divorce, move, or change of school.
- **Trust.** The basis of a child's safety is trust. Parents lay the groundwork for trust by telling small children where they are going and when they will return (rather than sneaking out to avoid children's tears) and then doing what they promised. Parents should avoid making promises they cannot keep.
- **Honesty.** Parents have all sorts of feelings and should not hide them. It takes strength to bring feelings into the open and deal with them. If parents share their feelings, children will learn that they do not have to hide theirs. Children are confused when parents say one thing but exhibit unspoken clues that say another. For example, when a parent is feeling and acting cranky and the child asks what's wrong, the parent says, "Nothing." Parents do not have to explain everything to be honest with their children, but they should aim to match actions and words. In this example, a more honest response might be, "I'm worried about an adult problem, and I'd rather not discuss it now."
- **Praise.** Parents should give helpful praise to children, expressing appreciation for their efforts, work, help, consideration, or creations. Avoid praise that makes a personal judgment. Say "Thank you for vacuuming. The rug looks like new," rather than "You are such a good girl." Similarly, parents should keep their criticism constructive rather than destructive. Say "It hurts Mary's feelings when she is called names" rather than "You're mean."
- **Empathy.** Watch for signs that show how a child feels. Actions and words are important. Parents should try to remember how they felt as children when they failed a test, argued with a friend, or didn't make the team. Parents show empathy by truly understanding how a child feels and can show that they understand by remarks such as, "It really must have hurt your feelings," or "You seem very disappointed."
- **Reasonable expectations.** Accepting children for themselves, not for their degree of performance. Parents must be careful not to put too much pressure on children to do more and better. Encourage children to strive for goals that are important to them and realistic. To form reasonable expectations, parents should educate themselves on the stages children pass through and the skills they possess at different ages. It may help for parents to ask themselves the following questions about their expectations for their children:
  - Why do I have this expectation?
  - Where did it come from?
  - What's in it for me?
  - Is this expectation based on my needs or my child's?
  - What purpose does it serve?
  - Does it realistically fit this particular child's age, temperament, and background?

Parents Can Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Dear Parent:

Perhaps the most critical child sexual abuse prevention strategy parents can exercise is good communication with children. This is challenging to every parent, especially for working parents and parents of adolescents. Here are some suggestions.

- Talk to the child every day and take time to listen and observe carefully. Learn as many details as you can about your child's activities and feelings. Encourage him or her to share concerns and problems with you.
- Explain that the child's body belongs to him or her alone, and that no one else has the right to touch it without his or her permission.
- Tell the child that some adults may try to hurt children and make them do things they don't feel comfortable doing. Often, these grownups call what they're doing a secret between themselves and a child.
- Explain that some adults may even threaten children by saying that their parents may be hurt or killed if the child ever shares the secret. Emphasize that an adult who touches them without permission is doing something wrong.
- Tell children that adults whom they know, trust, and love or who might be in a position of authority (a babysitter, relative, teacher, or police officer) might try to touch them in an abusive way. Try not to scare your child. Emphasize that few grown-ups ever do this and that most adults are deeply concerned about protecting children from harm.

Choosing a Child Care Center

Although the vast majority of this nation's preschools and child care centers are perfectly safe places, recent reports of child sexual abuse in these settings are a source of great concern to parents. Parents can relieve some of their concerns by taking these active steps.

- Make sure your child care center is reputable. State or local licensing agencies, child care information, and referral services may help you check it out.
- Find out as much as you can about the teachers and caregivers. Ask for the names and telephone numbers of other parents who have used the center. Arrange to talk with them about their experiences with the center.
- Learn about the center's hiring policies and practices. Ask how the organization recruits and selects staff. Find out whether they examine references and previous employment history.
- Learn whether the center welcomes and supports parent participation.
- Be sure that you have the right to drop in and visit the program at any time.
- Insist on being informed about every planned outing. *Never* give the organization blanket permission to take your child off the premises.
- Prepare a letter prohibiting the release of your child to anyone without your explicit authorization. Make sure the program knows who will pick up your child on any given day. Most centers provide a form release. If your doesn't, it is crucial for you to write your own.

If Your Child Complains

If you think your child has been sexually abused, believe him or her. Children rarely lie about sexual abuse. Commend the child for telling you and convey your support for him or her. A child's greatest fear is that he or she is at fault and responsible for the incident. Alleviating this self blame is of paramount importance. Other tips include the following:

- Temper your own reaction, recognizing that your perspective and acceptance are critical to

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helping the child handle his or her feelings. The best thing you can do may be to not convey your own horror about the abuse.

- Do not go to the child care center in question to talk about your concern. Instead, report the suspected molestation to a social services agency or the police.
- Find a specialized agency that evaluates sexual abuse victims—a hospital or a child welfare agency or a community health therapy group.
- If you seek a medical examination for your child, search for a physician who has the experience and training to detect and recognize sexual abuse. Community sexual abuse treatment programs, children's hospitals, and medical societies may be sources for referrals.
- Talk with other parents to ascertain whether their children show unusual behaviors or physical symptoms.
- Remember that taking action is critical, because if nothing is done, the child and others will continue to be at risk. Child sexual abuse is a community concern.
- Finally, do not blame yourself. Sexual abuse is a fact in our society. Many individuals who molest children find work through employment and community activities that give them access to children. Most cases of abuse occur in situations where the child knows and trusts the adult. A community and national consciousness of the problem is needed to eradicate child sexual abuse.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Development Services Administration for Children, Youth and Families.

How Parents Can Help Young Children Learn Study Skills

A Handout for Parents

Children need to see that you think learning is important. There are many ways you can build a focus on learning into your role as a parent. Talk to your child about his or her school life. Ask questions about what's going on. Provide him or her with a good place to study at home. Look at take-home assignments. Your caring sends a powerful message to your child about the value of learning. Here are some tips for helping your child develop study skills that will act as a foundation for the rest of their education.

- Children learn by doing. Give them opportunities to learn something new by trying new things with simple directions to follow. Get children involved in activities at home.
- Teach children to think for themselves. Instead of telling them everything, ask them questions that will lead them to think of the solution. Let them count money, measure baking ingredients, separate objects, or sort and classify collections of items.
- Encourage children to use their senses. Talk with them about differences in how things feel, smell, taste, look, and sound. Use descriptive words and let children make comparisons, such as soft as a kitten, gritty as sand.
- Let children try their own way of doing things. Even if you know an easier way, let them use their ability to solve problems in their own way. Not only will their thinking skills improve, but their self-confidence and self-esteem will, as well.
- Give children time to practice whatever they are learning. Most tasks require much repetition, thinking, and time. Be patient: give children more than a few tries. Use a tone of voice that will encourage them to try again.
- Enjoy your children. Share their excitement of learning with each new experience. Communicate warmly with them. Express yourself clearly so they will learn by your example to do the same.

Basic Skills Children Need

These skills are necessary if children are to learn how to study well in school. Parents must help children develop these skills before they enter school.

- **How to pay attention.** Before speaking to a child, call his or her name and make sure he or she is looking at you.
- **The desire to listen.** Do not constantly repeat yourself. Tell the child once.
- **Verbal expression.** If you express yourself clearly, children will learn by your example. Children should feel free to ask questions when they do not understand.
- **The ability to carry on a conversation.** Talk to your children and have them talk to you. Let them be present when you converse with other adults. Speak to them in descriptive language and in a way that invites their response. They will learn to carry on conversations with others by talking with you.
- **Knowledge of time.** Give the children a task to complete at a certain time. Help them keep track of the passage of time and the difference between hours, minutes, and other units of time.
- **Understanding the use of numbers.** Parents can teach children to count by using toys and everyday household objects.
- **Planning a job and following it through.** Children should learn to complete a task when they have begun it and to help clean up after a job is done.

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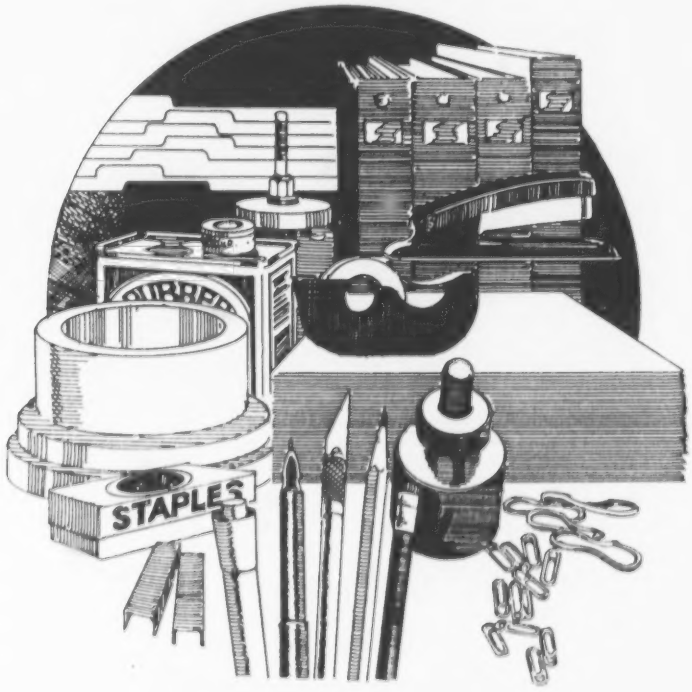
- **Waiting for something they want.** Children should learn that it is not always possible to have what they want and that time and effort must go into working for what they want. Success and rewards in school are the result of hard work and improvements.
- **Getting along with others.** Children learn how to get along with others from their parents who are their role models. Children will imitate parents' social habits such as shyness, boldness, politeness, or discourtesy.

Study Skills

Activities that parents do with their children can lay the groundwork for learning important study skills. Here are some things parents can do with school-age children.

- Research a topic of interest to your children. With your children watching and helping, find and use maps, charts, card catalogs, encyclopedias, diagrams, almanacs, cookbooks, automobile and appliance manuals, glossaries, and other sources of information.
- Create a graph or chart and teach children what can be learned from it.
- Buy a notebook and talk to children about a method for tracking writing assignments for certain classes. Help them organize a chart in which they can write the assignment, date due, grade received, and a place where a parent can check if he or she has seen the assignment.
- Review classroom notetaking with your older children. Help them learn to select which facts are necessary to notate in order to construct a record of the classroom presentation. Teach them the difference between their own words and technical terms and definitions. Talk to the teacher to see which classes require notetaking or to get tips on how to improve skills.
- Help children concentrate by taking away distractions while they are studying, such as TV, gadgets, magazines. Children should get that drink, sharpen pencils, find paper and eraser, and ask questions before sitting down to study. Then they should study uninterrupted. If children need practice in concentrating, set an alarm clock to ring in 15-, 30-, or 45-minute intervals, starting with shorter periods and working up gradually to concentrating for longer periods of time.
- Practice improving study skills with your children. The key to learning is practice. The repeated process of trial and error is necessary for them to learn how to learn.



What Children Should Know before They Attend Kindergarten

Your child will learn many things in school. It will be easier for your child to learn in school if he or she learns certain skills at home before entering kindergarten. Parents or guardians should help their child to learn the following:

To Say

- first and last name
- street and city address
- parent's name
- telephone number
- colors (names of the colors)
- numbers 1 to 10
- hello, good-bye, thank you, please

To Print

- first and last name
- numbers 1 to 10

To Do

- listen when someone reads or speaks
- learn simple rhythms and rhymes
- put a simple puzzle together
- zip and button
- take off outer clothing and boots
- share play things
- build with blocks or boxes
- turn pages in books
- cut with blunt-edged scissors

Health and Safety

- learn the safest route to and from school or bus stop
- learn to wash hands after using the bathroom
- learn to wash hands before eating
- learn names of body parts
- use a handkerchief or tissue to cover the mouth when he/she needs to sneeze or cough
- pick up (and put away) toys and clothing

Lo Que Los Niños Deben Saber Antes De Entrar Al Kinder

Estimado(a) Padre de Familia/Guardian:

Su hijo ohija aprenderá mucho en la escuela. Será mas fácil para eloella si aprenda ciertas habilidades en casa antes de entrar al kinder. Los padres o guardianes deben de ayudar a su hijo o hija aprender:

Decir

- su nombre y apellido
- dirección de la casa — calle y ciudad
- nombre de los padres
- número de teléfono
- los nombres de los colores
- los números de 1 al 10
- hola, adiós, gracias, por favor

Escribir

- su nombre y apellido
- los números de 1 al 10

Hacer

- escuchar cuando alguien le está leyendo o hablando
- aprender ritmos y rimas sencillos
- unir un rompecabezas sencillo
- subir y bajar un zipper; abotonar o abrochar
- quitar la ropa de afuera y las botas
- compartir los juguetes
- construir con bloques y cajas
- pasar o hojear las paginas de los libros
- cortar con tijeras para niños (desafiladas)

Sobre la Salud y la Seguridad

- aprender la ruta más segura para ir y regresar de la escuela o parada de autobús
- aprender a lavarse las manos después de usar el baño
- aprender a lavarse las manos antes de comer
- aprender los nombres de las partes del cuerpo
- usar un pañuelo o un kleenex para cubrir la boca cuando necesita estornudar or toser
- recoger y guardar los juguetes y la ropa

Translation from English by Myrna Toney, Kathleen Starks, and Norma Zavala.

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Get in Step with Breakfast . . . The First Step to Learning

A Handout for Parents

It has been said that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. This is especially true for children who need nutrients for growth and development. Children do not always receive adequate nutrition at home. For those children who don't, school lunch is often the only nutritious meal they receive throughout the day.

Breakfast has a major influence on a child's ability to take advantage of educational opportunities. It is difficult to concentrate on learning when the student is preoccupied with worrying how long it is until lunch. The last meal they ate may have been 10 to 24 hours ago.

When children are hungry, many physical symptoms accompany their hunger pangs. Low blood sugar levels that come from not eating can lead to headaches, dizziness, and fatigue. Stomach cramps, nausea, and vomiting are also reported by school nurses as morning hunger-related problems when students do not eat breakfast. These symptoms diminish or disappear when breakfast is eaten on a regular basis. Ellyn Satter, a leading authority on children's attitudes toward food, says, "children seem to function better during the morning if they have something to eat."

In addition to causing short-term symptoms of hunger, poor nutrition can have a more serious long-term impact on children's health. Malnutrition prevents children from achieving optimum growth and mental development. It also decreases resistance to infection, resulting in illness and increased school absence. Breakfast contributes to overall adequate nutritional intake and good health.

To ensure your children's nutritional needs are met, encourage them to eat a well-balanced breakfast at home or to eat breakfast at school if your school offers this program. Schools participating in the school breakfast program serve nutritious breakfasts based on an established meal pattern.

Research indicates that school breakfasts are nutritionally comparable to breakfasts prepared at home. Each breakfast in the School Breakfast Program must include one cup of fluid milk; a serving of a fruit, vegetable, or full-strength fruit or vegetable juice; and one serving from the meat and one from the grain group or two servings from either of those groups. This meal pattern should be followed when planning breakfasts at home to ensure your child gets the nutrients and energy he or she needs to start the day right and be alert in school.

If your school does not have a breakfast program, organize a committee to investigate the possibility of starting one. Conduct a survey of parents and students to build support for a breakfast program. Work with the school food service director to get pertinent information about the lunch program. Find out the number of students who are approved for free or reduced-price lunches and who therefore would be eligible for free or reduced-price breakfasts. Also determine how many children ride the bus to school and for how long. Estimate the number of children coming from households with two working parents or with a single parent working outside the home. These families often do not have time to prepare a well-balanced breakfast. Once this information is gathered, it can be developed into a fact sheet for the committee to use in a presentation to the school board and local community.

Barbara J. Pratt, school food service consultant
Barbara A. Hetzel, nutrition education and training program coordinator
Bureau for Food and Nutrition Services
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers need parents' help to do the best possible job of educating children. Through conferences, parents and teachers can offer one another suggestions that can help children learn. They can discuss children's progress, behavior, motivation, and reasons behind successes and failures.

Group Conferences

A general open house for parents early in the school year gives parents a chance to meet their children's teachers, to learn the school's plans and policies, and to hear classroom goals and teacher expectations. It is a time to ask general questions rather than to discuss the specific problems of a specific child. Parents might ask the following questions:

- What are the school rules regarding visiting, discipline, busing, lunches, homework, cars, testing procedures, and sex education policies?
- How is a child's progress evaluated?
- When are children taught in small groups rather than in a class?
- How much homework is given and how can parents help?
- What kind of math will they learn and how can parents help?
- How do you teach reading and how can parents help?
- When will children learn computer skills?
- In what parent councils or groups can parents participate?
- When is the best time to contact children's teachers?
- Are there programs for gifted or learning-disabled children?
- What is expected in terms of classroom and school behavior?
- What are the names of principals, counselors, bus supervisors, child care coordinators, PTA officers?

After the welcome and general information, parents can go to their children's classrooms to hear a short presentation from the teacher, tour the school building, meet and talk with teachers and other parents, and have refreshments. The group conference is a get-acquainted session for parents and teachers. It is a good time for parent to sign up for individual conferences or to volunteer to assist with a classroom or school activity.

Individual Conferences

Teachers should schedule conferences with each child's parents to discuss the child's progress and potential. Some of the topics which may be discussed are

- the child's overall ability to do school work.
- the child's progress in all subject areas.
- samples of the child's work.
- special abilities or interests the child is showing.
- books and materials used in the classroom.
- social skills exhibited by the child in and out of the classroom.

Preparing for the Conference

Teachers may contact the parent to arrange for a conference by telephone or letter. Usually there is less possibility of miscommunicating date and time if the arrangement is confirmed by letter. The following pages contain samples of a letter and questions for parents and teachers which may be duplicated and sent to parents.

Teachers can improve the parent-teacher relationship by assuming parent cooperation, inviting suggestions, thinking of parents as people who want to help, recognizing individual and cultural differences, respecting children's feelings, and living up to professional expectations. Teachers must *not* preach, downgrade family situations, overlook cultural differences in families, and use offensive expressions such as "broken home."

The parent-teacher conference should be held in a location which allows private, uninterrupted conversation. Parents and teachers should be seated on the same level, preferably away from the teacher's desk. Arrange for com-

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fortable seating, good lighting, and adequate ventilation. Organize samples of the children's work and test results so that they are easily accessible and will complement your conference plan.

Teachers should write down the topics they plan to discuss with the parents. Teachers need to know before the meeting what they hope to accomplish, communicate, and suggest and what specific steps can be recommended for parents to help improve their children's education. Teachers should discuss children's strong points as well as things that need improving.

During the Conference

Teachers can make the most of parent-teacher conferences with these tips.

- Give waiting parents folders of their children's work to review. It makes waiting easier and helps them prepare to meet.
- Begin the conference with a friendly general remark unrelated to the child. When speaking about the child, start the conference on a positive note stressing some good points about the student. Emphasize the child's strengths.
- Use words which all parents will understand; do not use technical educational jargon. Do not present a long list of negative concerns to parents. Work on a few negatives at a time.
- Ask the parent questions to uncover their concerns. Listen carefully to separate facts from emotions expressed. Accept comments from parents without showing surprise or disapproval. Do not panic if a parent becomes upset.
- Give parents time to ask questions, to interrupt, and to disagree. Relax and try to gain insight into the parents' attitude toward their child, school, and you. Do not argue with parents or impose your opinions on them. If you feel you must change a viewpoint, be as diplomatic as possible.
- When dealing with a child's problem, ask the parents to suggest an approach that could be used at home to help the child. Then suggest alternative approaches for joint consideration. This makes the parent a participant in developing plans and may lead to a discussion that will help the parent adopt a realistic plan. When working on solutions, try to set up a timetable. Ask for the parent's help and do not accept full responsibility for the child's education. Help parents see their responsibility for a share of their child's success or failure.
- End the conference by summarizing what has been said. End with a friendly remark. Thank the parents for their concern and time. Treat information as confidential. Document conference notes for future reference. Remember that you represent your school district and that the final goal of parent-teacher conferences is to help children.
- After the initial conference with a parent, follow up with a phone call or written note within a week. The note should thank the parent for attending the conference, ask if the parent has begun to follow through with the plan decided upon, encourage the parent to discuss the conference with his/ her child, and invite the parent to call the teacher or school to check up on the child's progress or simply to keep in touch.

Pre-conference Letter

Dear Parent:

The success of your child is important to both of us. We can gain new awareness of his/her needs, strengths, and limitations by sharing our observations. Will you please take the time to meet with me in your child's classroom? I am hoping one of the following dates and times will be convenient for you.

- _____
- _____
- _____

I have circled some questions below that I would like to discuss with you. On the reverse side of this sheet you will find a list of questions parents often wish to discuss with their child's teacher. Please read the list and choose three to five questions that you would like me to answer. Then return the form to me by next Monday. I am looking forward to our cooperative efforts to make this a productive year for your child.

Sincerely,

_____

_____ grade teacher

Teacher's Questions for Parents

1. What does your child like most about school?
2. What would make school more interesting for your child?
3. What activities take up your child's leisure time?
4. What activities do you and your child enjoy doing together?
5. What kind of chores does your child have at home?
6. Does your child have a quiet place to study at home?
7. How often do you and your child read together?
8. How do you feel about your child's homework?
9. How do you reinforce good behavior at home?
10. What TV programs do you and your child enjoy at home?
11. What things at home tend to upset your child?
12. How much sleep does your child get each night?
13. Does your child get along well with his/her peers?
14. How is your child meeting your expectations?
15. How is your child not meeting your expectations?
16. Are there any attitudes you hope your child will change?

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Parent Questions for Teachers

1. What is my child's class schedule?
2. Is my child working up to his/her ability?
3. Are children grouped for reading and math? If so, what group is my child in and how are children selected for each group?
4. What are my child's strengths and weaknesses in major subject areas?
5. Does my child need special help in any subject? If so, how can I help my child at home?
6. What will my child be learning this year in reading? math? science?
7. How much time should be spent on homework, and how can I help with homework?
8. What grading system do you use?
9. What tests will my child take this year and to what extent will tests determine my child's grade?
10. What discipline procedures do you use in the classroom?
11. Does my child get along with other children? with you?
12. Does my child respect the rights and property of others?
13. Does my child show any behavior, such as squinting or irritability, that may be signs of a medical or emotional problem?
14. Can you mention other ways we can help our child to reach academic success?

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How Parents Help Teens Establish Values

Dear Parent:

Values are transmitted to children in the home. In order to transmit values, there needs to be stability in the family. Values are the lessons of what family life is about. If family life is chaotic, transmission of values often gets pushed away/If children don't see parents solving problems together or making a commitment to one another in marriage or working through a long-standing relationship, children don't learn these valuable lessons. Children must see these roots of stability and commitment growing if they are to develop a sense of values.

Why are some families able to cope in the face of life's stresses while other families become frustrated or appear to fall apart? Hamilton McCubbin, dean of the School of Family Resources and Consumer Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studied 300 Midwestern families and found two types of families to be stronger and happier than others. He called them "hardy" and "rhythmic" families.

Hardy Families

- These families were optimistic in the face of difficulties.
- They met challenges head-on and were committed to working through problems.
- They had confidence in each other and in their problem-solving ability.
- They believed they had the power to solve their own problems rather than to be controlled by fate.

Rhythmic Families

- These families felt it important that they spend time together.
- They had weekly family outings, shared household chores, and ate at least one meal together daily.
- They spent quiet time together in the evenings when they talked or played games together.
- They had organized routines, such as children doing homework and going to bed at the same time each night, or parents and children taking time to pursue a hobby or sport together, or children playing alone or with friends each day.

Values Are Caught

Values are not only taught, they are caught. The old adage that actions speak louder than words is true when it comes to helping children establish their own system of values. It is hard for a teenager to accept the value of good citizenship if parents never vote or attend a civic meeting. Youths will find it difficult to value honesty if parents boast about cheating on their income taxes. Teens may not learn to appreciate their school if they hear their parents complain about school and teachers.

Teens mirror the words and actions of their parents. If parents are involved in their school and community, teens will become involved too. If parents get involved in their children's academic life, they will have an important effect on their children's achievements in school.

Communication Is Important

Communication is a critical element in helping teens develop values. Teens need to hear their parents talk openly about what they do and believe, why they are making certain decisions, and the reasons behind their convictions.

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Keep the lines of communication open during a teenager's high school years. Plan new activities to learn together, such as learning a new sport, taking a class, or building something for the home. It is important to spend time with teens, not only to share activities and foster a growing relationship, but also to create opportunities for discussions. Here are a few thoughts for parents:

- When your teen talks, listen–don't interrupt.
- Be open minded; don't judge.
- Allow your teen to express emotions.
- Maintain a sense of humor.
- Show interest in your teen's activities.
- Support your teen's growing independence.
- Ask your teen for his or her thoughts on some of your problems.
- Allow teens to make their own decisions and mistakes.
- Be kind and show respect for your teen.
- Be patient when you can't understand or agree with your teen.
- Remember that there are two lasting gifts parents give their children: roots and wings.

Until There's a Home, There's "A Child's Place"

At the start of each school day, Sandra Shekaramiz doesn't know who will be in her class. Of those who do come, some may be so exhausted or depressed they can't answer even the simplest questions. Some won't even know where they'll spend that night.

The newest program in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) Schools serves children —and their parents—who may be living in a shelter or, even worse, in the family car. They are among the nation's thousands of homeless. This program, called "A Child's Place," is based on the hope that soon these children will find a "home" as regular students in a Charlotte elementary school.

The program operates out of the First Presbyterian Church, which provides two classrooms and office space, while the school district supplies transportation, furniture, staff, and food. An assistant and volunteers help deal with more than 70 students.

Shekaramiz prepared for the job by spending a night as a volunteer in a shelter for homeless people. The experience helped her understand why her classroom can be calm one minute and volatile the next. "When you have so little, it's hard to give up anything, including one inch of your personal space," Shekaramiz said.

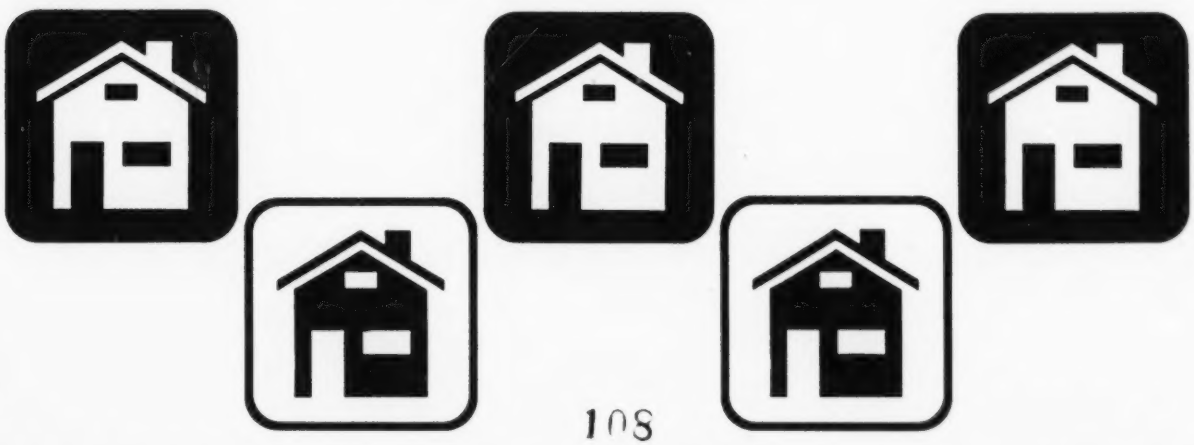
While children are attending classes, family advocate Mary Alice Adams helps bridge the gap between families and the agencies that assist with housing and finances. She also works with groups of children to help them deal with their anger and relieve stress.

"They love this place," Adams said. "It's warm, safe, secure, and nurturing." Even if parents move overnight, they are encouraged to send their children to school in a taxi. Principal Ann Clark pays the fare. In class, Shekaramiz strives to make her students understand they're part of a structure. "It's extremely important they come here every day, and the rules are the same every day," she said. Shekaramiz believes that if a teacher works with children to convince them they can achieve, there's a good possibility they will. "That's what teaching is," she said. "It's not the math or the reading or the writing. It's convincing the child he or she can do it.

"We find out something the student can do and then provide an activity for a small success. We do short-term, high-success activities. We work with a lot of praise."

Most important, Shekaramiz lets the children know she cares. She visits shelters and organizes drives to donate holiday packages to homeless members of the community. And it doesn't bother her when her students call her "Big Mama." She explained, "I'm not rigidly into rules. I'm into respect for everyone."

Source: Chris Folk, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, P.O. Box 30035, Charlotte, NC 28230.



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Characteristics of Teen Cults

The National PTA offers insights into the techniques cult_ use to recruit members and sustain their memberships.

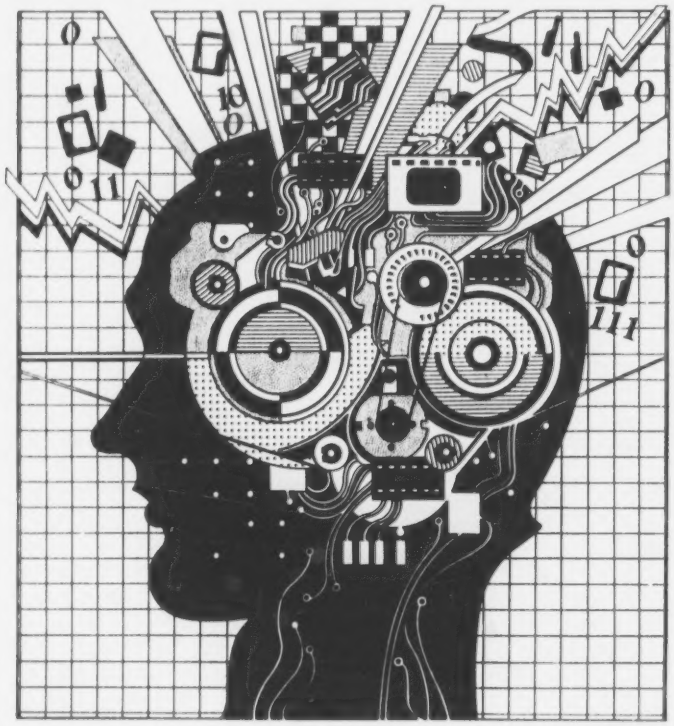
Cults are groups or movements exhibiting an excessive devotion or dedication to some person, idea, or thing. Every career or life decision may be made by the cult leaders, including whether members should go to school, says Marcia Rudin, director of the International Cult Education Program based in New York.

Rudin says cults employ unethically manipulative techniques of persuasion and control designed to advance the leaders' goals to the detriment of members, their families, or the community.

Cults generally share the following techniques.

- Members submit to an authoritarian, all-powerful leader or leaders whose decisions cannot be questioned and who discourage rational thought.
- They employ deceptive recruiting techniques.
- Leaders weaken the follower psychologically, undermining other support systems such as friends, families, and clergy.
- Cult members are told the outside world is evil or even Satanic.
- Some groups are heavily armed.
- Cults often have contempt for outside society and its laws and social mores.

Source: PTA Today, *National PTA, 700 N. Rush St., Chicago, IL 60611-2571; 312/787-0977.*



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Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Much attention is given to parental influence in the use of alcohol and other drugs. A student's decision to try alcohol and other drugs is primarily influenced by early family environment. As a parent, you are the most important influence in your children's lives. Your words and actions carry great power with children.

Factors that Predict Alcohol/ Drug Abuse

Here are some factors that may predict alcohol/ drug abuse:

- family history of alcoholism
- family management problems, especially families with much parental discord and violence
- parental alcohol/drug use and attitudes toward use
- lack of bonding to society
- exposure to ads that encourage drinking
- how parents handle alcohol during celebrations and holidays
- siblings who use drugs
- sexual abuse
- chronic depression
- peer groups involved in drugs and alcohol
- poor self-concept

Is My Child Using Drugs?

Certain behaviors, such as the following, can warn parents that their child may be involved with drugs:

- sudden decline in attendance or performance at work or school
- impaired relationship with family or friends
- ignoring curfews
- unusual temper flare-ups or abrupt change in mood
- increased borrowing of money from parents or friends
- stealing from home, school, or employer
- heightened secrecy about actions and possessions
- having alcohol or drug paraphernalia
- associating with a new group of friends, especially those who use drugs
- is sick more often or skips school
- eats more or less than usual
- has trouble sleeping

What Parents Can Do

- Be a good role model.
- Be a family that encourages and loves children.
- Create positive family activities.
- Discuss family rules regarding drug use.
- Discuss the issues of substance use and abuse when children are young.
- Be loving and responsive.
- Increase your own self-esteem.
- Admit when you don't know something, and offer to find the answer together.
- Be willing to speak up about advertising which glorifies drinking.
- Give children responsibilities from an early age.
- Help children develop problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- Try to understand things from your children's perspective.
- Let other positive, life-giving people help you parent your children, such as relatives, teachers, counselors, and others with positive values who promote safe and growth-producing activities.
- Develop a sense of humor and have fun with your children.
- Give assistance to school and community projects that sponsor substance-free activities.
- Help schools develop programs and policies regarding alcohol and other drug use/abuse.

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Available Resources

The following articles, booklets, and books are available from the Wisconsin Clearinghouse, Dept. FH, P.O. Box 1468, Madison, WI 53701.

- "Helping Your Pre-teen Say 'No': A Parent's Aid", 12 pages, 50 cents
- "I Need to be Me: The Emergence of Self," 20 cents
- "Like Parent, Like Child," 20 cents
- "Who's Sending Your Signals?" 20 cents
- "Young Children and Drugs: What Parents Can Do," 20 cents
- "Who's Raising Your Family?" A Workbook for Parents and Children, by John Delaine, multicultural, illustrated, 48 pages, $4.50

Another good source of information on this subject is "What Do You Say – A Parent's Guide to Talking With Children About Drugs and Alcohol," available through Michael Furstenberg, Human Relations Service, Wellesley, MA 02181.

Working with Families Who Live in Poverty

Awareness for Teachers

Educating economically disadvantaged students requires a district commitment to identifying the unique needs of this growing population of children and to planning and developing reasonable approaches for meeting these needs. Solutions to the problems these children face cannot be found solely in the classroom or other aspects of the school experience: economic disadvantage leaves its mark on these children before and after school as well as during school.

As you read this article, ask yourself these questions about your students and their parents:

- How many come to class hungry or tired?
- How many come to class in poor health?
- How many live in unsafe homes or neighborhoods?
- How many are alone after school due to working parent(s)?
- How many parents are living in stressful economic conditions where making ends meet isn't even possible?
- How many parents stay away from contact with schools because of conflict with work, because they don't have suitable clothes to wear, or feel intimidated by the language educators use, or feel blamed for their children's school problems when it takes all their energy to get by from day to day financially, physically, and emotionally?

Most solutions to these problems lie outside the power and authority of the schools. In the absence of affordable and safe housing, health care, daycare for working parents, and decent wages, schools can only strive for creative ways to alleviate some of the overwhelming problems economically disadvantaged children experience.

On the other hand, teachers can use reasonable approaches that begin to meet some of the social, emotional, and academic needs of these children.

School-Based Planning and Management Teams

School-based planning and management teams provide a flexible method for finding solutions to students' academic and personal development needs.

Teams are building-specific and include the principal as the team facilitator. Other key members represent instructional staff, pupil services mental health staff, community resource representatives, and, most critical of all, parents of economically disadvantaged students.

The local school board must commit financial resources for team operation activities and allocate staff time and, if necessary, reimbursement for parent participation.

Ground rules for team members are established at the first meeting and clearly communicated throughout subsequent meetings. These include a no-fault problem- solving approach; acknowledging that "yes, buts" are barriers to problem solving; viewing problems as opportunities to improve students' success; and recognizing that decisions are made on the basis of group consensus as opposed to majority votes.

Schedule considerations include meeting at least monthly with sub-groups meeting in between to work on various assignments. Meetings must be scheduled at a time which allows for participation of economically disadvantaged parents.

Program planning and development by the team should always be based on a study or survey of the initially identified problem affecting educationally disadvantaged youths, as perceived by the community, school and parents of these students. This information is then used to define the problem and generate specific solutions that translate into team goals.

When surveying economically disadvantaged adults, team members should keep in mind that many frequently won't respond to forms and paperwork. Face-to-face contact is the best way to get information. They need to be

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asked direct questions and reassured that the team values and needs their opinion. Team members should use common everyday language.

Program planning and development should always include a review of existing board policy which may have adverse or positive effects on the identified problem.

The team establishes at least one long-term goal and short-term objectives to accomplish the goal for a specific age range of students within the building for which the team is responsible. It is important that some objectives be accomplished with 30 to 90 days so that members see concrete results early in the process.

Parent Participation

Traditional attempts to involve parents of economically disadvantaged children in these teams typically don't work. One response is usually to say they don't care or refuse to get involved. The following are nontraditional alternatives that may work:

- Provide child care and transportation. These parents can't afford these extra expenses. Frequently they find it difficult or impossible to make ends meet in the first place.
- Make sure that for each school and community team member there is also a parent so that parents don't feel outnumbered and intimidated. Make every effort to help them feel comfortable with the team. Keep in mind that this may be a new experience for them.
- Consider that these parents may have little in the way of personal possessions and clothes. One way to avoid highlighting this is for professional members of the team to dress informally and casually.
- Instead of sending notes to parents to invite their participation, make person-to-person contacts. Actively reach out to parents to encourage them to respond.
- Bring parents in for team membership at the very first meeting. They will feel like outsiders if added to the team after relationships are already established.

A school's failure to reach and successfully educate students living in poverty happens not because educators or parents don't care. It is partly because all of us by nature are resistant to changing our behavior and attitudes. Once recognized, this barrier can be overcome and acted upon by a school-based management and planning team.

Sean Mulhern
School Psychology Consultant
Bureau for Pupil Services
School Psychological Services
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

12-20-90
Update

Statewide Hmong Associations in Wisconsin

Fox Valley Lao/Hmong Association	**President:** Doua Lee 101 West Edison Avenue Appleton, WI 54915 Telephone: (414) 739-7244
Eau Claire Hmong Association	**President:** Kou Xiong 1624 Bellinger Street Eau Claire, WI 54703 Telephone: (715) 832-8420
Oshkosh Lao/Hmong Association, Inc.	**President:** Yong Lia Lor P.O. Box 1108, 19 W. First Street Fond du Lac, WI 54935 Telephone: (414) 426-0150 2929 Harrison Street Oshkosh, WI 54901 Telephone: (414) 426-0150
Brown County Hmong Association	**President:** Teng Ly 401 9th Street Green Bay, WI 54304 Telephone: (414) 432-8900
[New] Lao Family Community of Brown County	**President:** Peng Phommaleuth 1319 South Broadway Green Bay, WI 54304
LaCrosse Hmong Association	**President:** Lu Yang 326 South 7th Street LaCrosse, WI 54601 Telephone: (608) 784-2704

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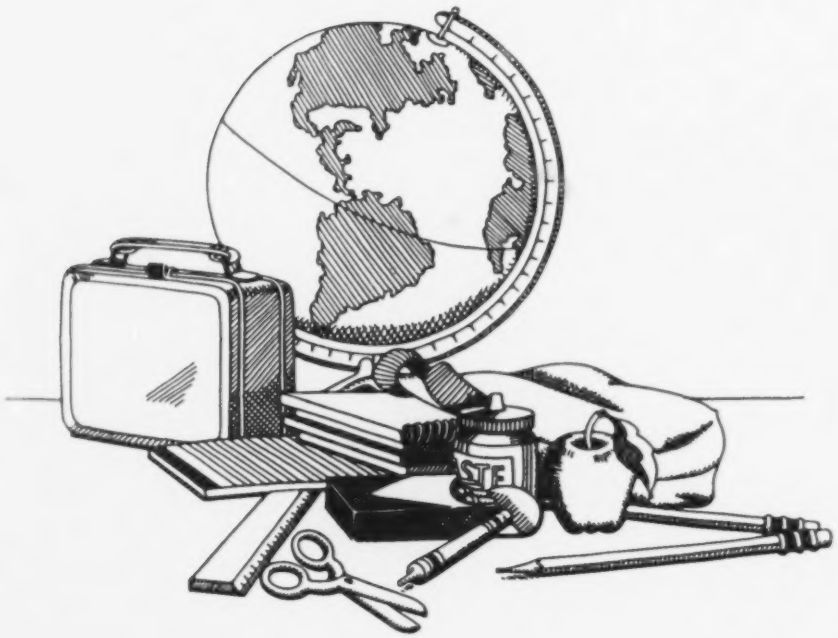
United Refugee Services	**President:** Sarith Ou 1045 E. Dayton, Room #302 Madison, WI 53703 Telephone: (608) 256-6400
American/Hmong Friendship	**President:** Vang Ge 2414 W. Vliet Street Milwaukee, WI 53205 Telephone: (414) 344-6575
Lao Family Community, Inc.	**President:** Ger Vang 1420 W. Scott Street Milwaukee, WI 53204 Telephone: (414) 383-4180
Sheboygan Hmong Mutual Assistance Association	**President:** Vue Yang 901 Superior Avenue Sheboygan, WI 53081 Telephone: (414) 458-0808
Wausau Area Hmong Mutual Association	**President:** Yong Doua Xiong 514 Fulton Street Wausau, WI 54401 Telephone: (715) 842-8390



English/Spanish Services

United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. (UMOS)

Founded in 1965, UMOS is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to the betterment of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and other special needs groups in Wisconsin. Through a variety of funding sources, UMOS offers employment and educational training and support services to a wide spectrum of the population groups in the communities where UMOS is established.

The following services, many of which are provided in cooperation with local vocational and educational centers, are offered by UMOS to eligible program participants:

Employment/Training Services

On-the-job training
Job development
Job referrals
Business consulting
Assessment of needs
Employment counseling
Adult basic education
English as a second language
GED preparation
AIDS education
Adult literacy courses

Supportive Services (limited)

Nutritional assistance
Health/medical
Emergency assistance
Transportation
Referrals to other agencies
Reloaction assistance
Outreach & referral for disabled

Central/Administrative Office
809 West Greenfield Avenue
P.O. Box 04129
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53204
414-671-5700
Executive Director: Mr. Lupe Martinez

Statewide Offices

103 S. Water Street
Sparta, WI 54656
608-269-3331

P.O. Box 10573
1138 W. Mason Street
Green Bay, WI 54307-0573
414-497-1381

121 N. Marie Street
Wautoma, WI 54982
414-787-4335

3802 Packers Avenue
Madison, WI 53704
608-249-1180

1216 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Appleton, WI 54914
414-734-1451

306 S. Center Street
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
414-887-7233

1712 57th Street
Kenosha, WI 53140
414-652-2549

373 West 6th Street
Richland Center, WI 53581
608-647-3420

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Quotations

Children in Need

The communities that devalue education or are ill informed about it are the communities that lack strong support for quality public schools. Children are the ones who suffer from this lack of commitment.

—Herbert J. Grover

Schools can't do it alone. They must work together with communities to design programs that meet the special academic, vocational, health, and social needs of disadvantaged children and adolescents.

—Herbert J. Grover

Too often we prize other things more highly than school. When parents value education and become involved in their children's school experience, both parents and children are winners.

—Herbert J. Grover

A difficult child is nearly always made difficult by wrong treatment at home . . . The difficult child is the child who is unhappy. He is at war with himself; and in consequence, he is at war with the world.

—A. S. Neil

Few parents have the courage and independence to care more for their children's happiness than for their own success.

—Erich Fromm

To grow into humanity, children and young people need increasing responsibility. To develop humane, compassionate people, we must do fewer things for them and more things with them. We must help them earn their life.

—Edgar Dale

How a man feels about himself is often more critical to his success than what he is objectively.

—Harry Levinson, M.D.

A little boy was asked how he learned to skate. He replied, "Oh, by getting up every time I fell down."

—Royal Bank of Canada,
Monthly letter, January 1971.

We can teach so that our students feel inferior, or so as to help them think better of themselves.

—Anonymous

You can't teach a child unless you reach him.

—Anonymous

Teachers of the past were skilled in handling words. The teachers of the future must be skilled in handling experiences.

—Edgar Dale

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Children In Need

References to 1987-90

This listing of articles is included for easy cross-reference of materials related to this quarter's topic. References to 1987-88—*The Year of the Family in Education* are followed by references to 1988-89—*The Families in Education Program: Our Children . . . Wisconsin Cares* and references to 1989-90—*The Year of Community Partnerships*.

Following each list are letters denoting target audience:

A = Administrators
C = Community, Families in Education
K = K-12 Staff
P = Parents

References to 1987-88 (Gold Packet)

"Who Says Our Home Is Broken?" September (K,P)

"Special Report: Family Togetherness," December (K,P)

"Families at Work," February (A,C,K,P)

"Special Report: When Parents Are at Work, Who Watches the Kids?" February (A,C,K,P)

"Drug Proof Your Kids," April (P)

"Kids on Their Own: A Guide for Parents and Kids," August (A,C,K,P)

"Getting Ready for School . . . At All Levels," August (A,C,K,P)

"Helping with Homework", August (P)

"School Age Child Care," August (P)

"The First Day of School: A Checklist for Parents," August (P)

"For Parents: Signs of Problem Use of Alcohol or Other Drugs," August (P)

References to 1988-89 (Green Packet)

"Community Resources Can Strengthen Families," September-December (A,C,K,P)

"Networks Can Help Children," September-December (A,K)

Helping Gifted Underachievers: Tips for Parents and Teachers," December-February (K,P)

"What Teens Need from Teachers, Parents and Other Adults," March-May (A,C,K,P)

"My Experience in Foster Care," March-May (K,P)

"Helping Youth Deal With Stress," March-May (K,P)

"Families of Children with Disabilities: Strategies for Coping," June-August (K,P)

"Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect," June-August (A,K)

References to 1989-90 (Red Packet)

"Children at Risk," January (A,K,P)

"What About the School Bully?" January (K,P)

"Help Children Improve Test-Taking Without Anxiety," January (P)

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"Developing Multicultural Awareness in Children," March (K,P)

"What Early Teens Worry About," April (K,P)

"Divorce and Remarriage: How They Affect Children," May (K,P)

"Divorce: Parents' Rights and Children's Feelings," May (A,K,C,P)

"Overachieving Parents May Confuse Learning with Loving," June-August (P)

Resources

These publications describe services for children with special needs.

Ethnic Groups in the United States

This booklet presents a discussion by different ethnic communities from various professions on the historical and current trends in the relationships among ethnic groups, patterns of immigration, education, politics, and legal rights. Copies are available world-wide. Postage in excess of $1.00 must be paid by the person requesting the information. Available from:

The American Assembly
412 Altschul Hall
Barnard College
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027-6598

Rising Voices

This 210-page book contains inspiring stories of 52 outstanding Spanish-speaking Americans, portrayed in words and photos. Up to 25 copies are available to schools in the United States. Available from:

Carnation Company
Community Relations Department
5045 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Parents: Do You Know the Early Signs of Children's Special Needs?

This brochure lists early warning signs that may indicate a child has a physical or mental condition that could handicap normal growth and development. Single copies are available to individuals, schools, libraries, and industries in the United States and Canada. Available from:

Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Caring About Kids: Talking to Children About Death

This pamphlet provides some general information which may be helpful to parents in talking to their children about death. Single copies are available to schools, libraries, and industries in the United States and Canada. Materials may be copied. Available from:

National SIDS Clearinghouse
8201 Greensboro Drive, Suite 600
McLean, VA 22102

Chess Materials

A wide variety of free promotional and instructional material is available upon request to adult sponsors of school chess programs. Titles are:

Basic Chess Curriculum
Chess Makes Kids Smart
A Guide to Scholastic Chess
In Writing: How To Read and Write Chess
School Mates Newsletter

Available from:

U.S. Chess Federation
Scholastic Coordinator
186 Route 9W
New Windsor, NY 12550

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English as a Second Language

These publications address the issues involved with teaching a child with limited English and the proper teacher certificates to teach English as a second language. Single copies are available world-wide. These publications are designed for use by teachers. Suggested titles are:

A Memo: Educating Children With Limited English

Available from:

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
1118 22nd Street, N.W., #205
Washington, D.C. 20037

Materials for Teenagers

A Message for Teens from Teens

This folder offers teens and preteens information on good health habits and reasons behind responsible decisions on smoking, drugs, and childbearing. Classroom quantities are available to schools, libraries, and industries in the United States and Canada. Available from:

March of Dimes
Community Services Department
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605

A Message to Teenagers

This simple 12-question quiz is designed to help teenagers decide when drinking is becoming a problem. The pamphlet stresses that alcoholism can affect anyone. Up to 500 copies are available in the United States. Available from:

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.
468 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Educational Research

The Educational Resources Information Center has prepared a free set of pamphlets called the Conclusion Brochures series to help parents understand recent educational research. Each brochure includes answers to commonly asked questions, names of organizations to call for help, and additional reading materials. The titles are:

How Can Elementary Science Education Be Improved?
How Can We Keep Students in School?
Why Don't Our Children Like Math?
How Do I Help My Child Say "No" to Drugs?
What Alternatives Do Public Schools Offer?
What Can Kindergarten Teach Children About Reading?
Do Schools Teach Us Enough About Our Constitution?

To order, call (800) USE-ERIC. Camera-ready art for reproduction is available on request to parent/teacher associations, schools, libraries, and other agenices.

SAMPLE INFORMATION RELEASE
(Adapt to your needs and retype on district letterhead)

Local Contact: (name, title, telephone) _____

Have you ever been afraid to ask a question? Have you always known where to begin searching for answers? The _____ School District is making every effort to join forces with (list area resources) to meet the needs of children in our complex society. If you have ideas for expanding cooperation, contact _____ and offer your suggestions. We'd appreciate hearing from you!

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